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E. C. George

From "Dear Old Paten" with the
best love & wishes. 1 Sept 1906

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ANGLING EXPERIENCES

AND

REMINISCENCES,

BY

RICHARD MASON

||

(A LINCOLNSHIRE CLODHOPPER).

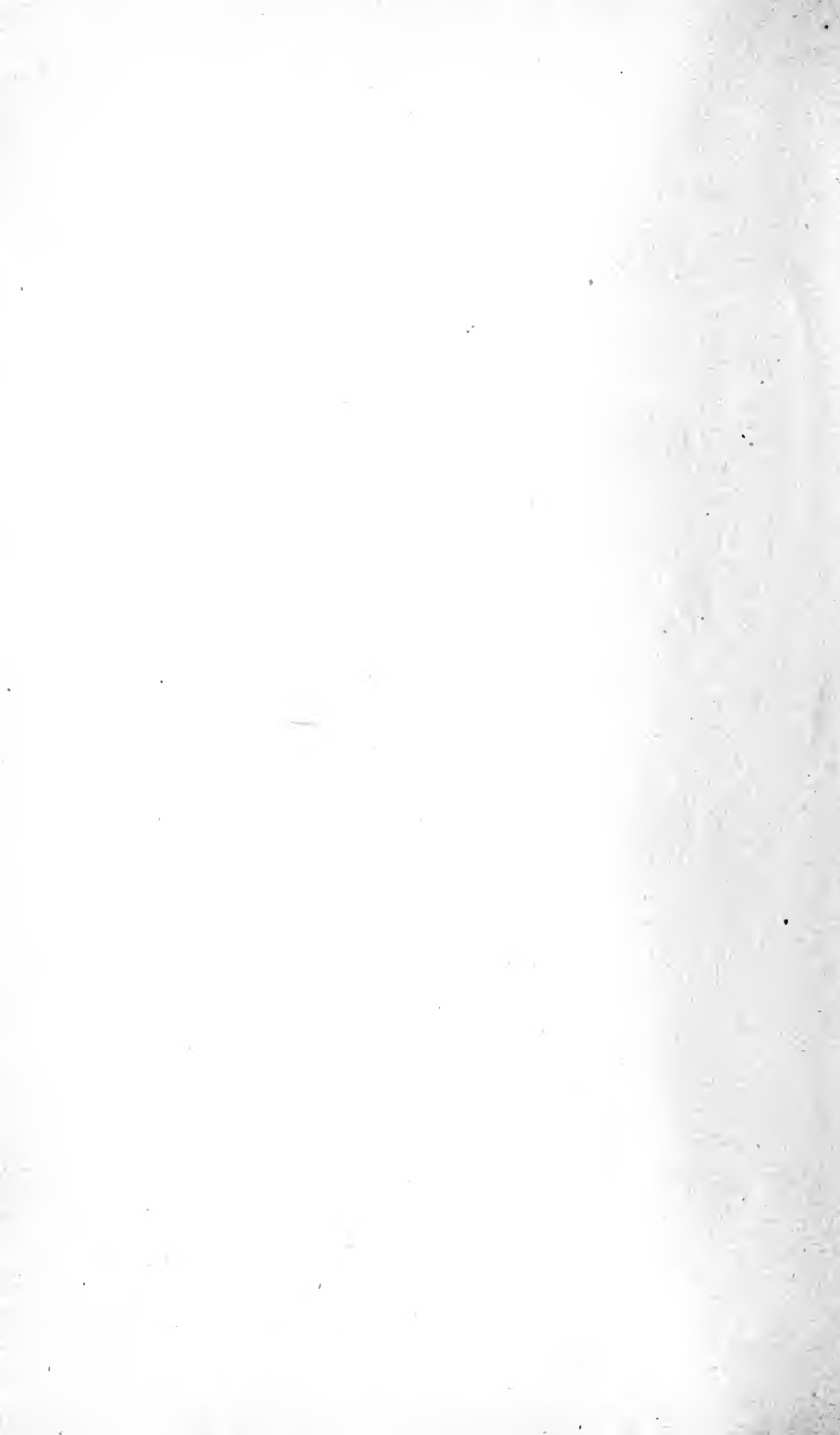
*Dedicated, without permission, to all true disciples of
Izaak Walton's gentle art, and to their wives, daughters,
and sweethearts, not forgetting the "lonesome" widow.*

*Oh! . . . that mine
adversary had written a book."*

. Job xxxi. v 35.

GREAT GRIMSBY:

GRIMSBY NEWS Co., Ltd., Printers and Stationers, 83 & 85, Victoria Street,
and Fish Dock Road.



P R E F A C E .

As inward love breeds outward talk,
 The hound some praise, and some the hawk ;
 Some, better pleased with private sport,
 Use tennis ; some a mistress court :
 But these delights I neither wish
 Nor envy, while I freely fish.

* * *

Of recreation there is none
 So free as fishing is alone ;
 All other pastimes do no less
 Than mind and body both possess ;
 My hand alone my work can do,
 So I can fish and study too.

The Angler's Song.

" I T would be very tedious and trifling to recount all his
 "(Mark Antony's) follies ; but his fishing must not be
 "forgot. He went out to angle one day with Cleopatra ;
 "and being so unfortunate as to catch nothing in the presence
 "of his mistress, he was very much vexed, and gave secret
 "orders to the fishermen to dive under water and put fishes
 "that had been fresh taken upon his hook. After he had
 "drawn up two or three, Cleopatra perceived the trick ; she
 "pretended, however, to be surprised at his good fortune and
 "dexterity, told it to all her friends, and invited them to come
 "and see him fish the next day. Accordingly, a very large
 "company went out in the fishing vessels ; and as soon as
 "Antony had let down his line, she commanded one of her
 "servants to be beforehand with Antony's, and, diving into the
 "water, to fix upon his hook a *salted* fish, one of those which
 "were brought from the Euxine Sea."

Plutarch.

" *Cleopatra* :—Give me mine angle, we'll to the river ; there,
 My music playing far off, I will betray
 Tawny-finn'd fishes : my bended hook shall pierce
 Their slimy jaws ; and as I draw them up,
 I'll think them everyone an Antony,
 And say, ' Ah, ha ! you're caught ! '

Charmian :—"Twas merry, when
 You wager'd on your angling ; when your diver
 Did hang a salt fish on his hook, which he
 With fervency drew up."

ACT II., SCENE 5.

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1886.

I.—THE GNAT, THE BAT, AND THE CAT.

THERE are many devoted followers of Izaak Walton, both at Grimsby and Cleethorpes, and it has occurred to Mr. Hopper that a narration of a few angling experiences and reminiscences during the last 25 or 30 years might prove interesting to those who are fond of piscatorial pursuits. It is an acknowledged fact that where there was one angler 20 years ago, there are now 50. No doubt a certain proportion of the 50 is due to the increase of population, and also to the increased facilities and advantages afforded to the angler in getting to the various resorts where the finny tribe are to be found, but by far the greater proportion is to be attributed to the fascination of the sport. North Lincolnshire is fertile in its trout streams and fresh water canals and rivers. The trout streams are, of course, mostly private waters, but fresh water fishermen have plenty of resorts where they can angle for coarse fish. There is the Trent with its white and carp bream, barbel, perch, flounders, pike, chub, roach, rudd, eels, and dace, not to mention other varieties which are not so abundant. Then there is the Ancholme, containing all these varieties, except barbel and, possibly, rudd and chub. The canal from Louth to Tetney Lock contains pike, perch, roach, rudd, eels, flounders, gudgeon (in some of the lengths between the locks), and a few tench and trout, although the latter species do not come under the category of coarse fish. Several local anglers will remember Mr. Geo. Hollingsworth, of Grimsby, three or four years ago landing a fine trout of 1½lbs. from the canal at Fire Beacon. Mr. Hopper's first angling experiences were in his school days at Louth, about 32 or 33 years ago. Out-Fen Lock, on the Louth Navigation, was generally the first resting place of himself and schoolfellows, and fine perch used to be caught there in those days. Mr. Hopper remembers one scorching hot day in July, when tired of fishing,

he and his schoolmates knocked it off and tried to beguile away the time with a game at marbles, making a mutual promise to each other not to go and look at the rods until three games at ring-taw had been finished. This compact having been faithfully observed, the rods were returned to, and a fine perch, weighing 3½lbs., was brought to bank on one of the rods. This is the largest perch Mr. Hopper ever heard of being caught in this district. About 50 or 60 brace of fish were generally in the creels when it was time to start the six mile walk home, and that quantity generally represented the catch of Mr. Hopper's and two other rods.

In those days ground baiting was never practised by schoolboys, who, if the fish ceased to bite in one place, used to try another. What days those were to be sure! Home was generally left from six to eight in the morning, and reached again at night from nine to ten o'clock. What a tramp home it used to be with those heavy baskets of fish! Indian file was the order of walking, and not a word spoken until home was reached. No doubt all felt too fagged out with the day's outing in the hot sun to talk, but it was an understood thing that "no talking" was the order of the evening's march home. If thunder storms came on during the day's outing, the haycocks were requisitioned and crept under, only to be emerged from in a parboiled condition when the storm had expended its violence. In 1864 the trout Mr. Hopper caught in the river Lud, at Louth, averaged within an ounce and a half of 1lb. each. A curious incident in angling happened one fine evening in June about the year just referred to. It would be about a quarter to nine, and Mr. Hopper was crossing the bridge which spanned the Lud from his father's garden to the house, when the servants, who were sewing on the bridge, remarked that a fine trout was rising below the bridge. A fly rod was soon taken down from the wall under the greenhouse, and found to have only one fly on the cast, and that a black gnat *with a broken barb*. The second throw over the speckled beauty was successful, and down the trout rushed into full ten feet of water—up he came with a leap of three feet out of the water, which

he repeated several times, but after ten minutes fruitless resistance, the housemaid skilfully got him in the landing net, and he pulled down the scale at 1 lb. 9 oz. Another trout was rising above the bridge, and the first throw proved sufficient; another ten minutes and the housemaid had him safely in the net, and when weighed he was found to be 1lb. 5oz. Two beauties these were, both for sport and condition; but the evening's sport was not over. The rod had been, for a few moments whilst weighing the last fish, placed upright on the bridge, with the gut cast gently waving in the slight breeze, and on returning it was found that a bat had made for the fly and hooked himself in the wing. He gave lots of play in mid-air, but was eventually landed after taking out some line. After releasing the bat the fly was let drop on to the bridge and whilst there pussy cat, who had been intent upon the proceedings, evidently thought the lure which had proved so tempting to the trout and bat must be a dainty morsel for herself. Anyhow she forthwith attempted to negotiate the artificial fly with the result that she hooked herself in the top lip, and Mr. Hopper had then the mortification of "playing" poor pussy on land. After a game fight she was landed between the knees and then the unpleasant task of extracting the hook had to be attempted. What with the frantic scratching and biting this was no easy task, and far from a pleasant one as can well be imagined, but at length the hook was withdrawn, and pussy never ventured upon artificial black gnats again. The sight of a fishing rod was sufficient for her for the remainder of her days.

The Lud used to yield fine trout; Mr. Hopper's elder brother who had caught the perch of 3½lbs. before referred to, being also fortunate enough to catch with an artificial fly a fine speckled beauty of 2½lbs. within five yards of where the other two were brought to bank. Trout of 2lbs. were not at all uncommon in those deep waters of the Lud, and no doubt they would have grown to considerably larger size, but the miller had a happy knack, when there was a nice accumulation of good fish in the dam above his mill, of finding one of the gowts out of order, and thereupon the dam was run off, carrying all

the fish to below the gowts where, as soon as they could stem the current they headed back.' This was the miller's opportunity; down went the gowts, stopping the flow of water, and as many as forty, fifty, and sixty brace of trout would be left struggling amongst the chalk stones below the gowts and would fall easy preys to the miller and his men. This was a better hour's work than grinding corn. Of course this freak of the miller spoilt the fishing for the remainder of the season, as the trout in the shallower waters of the brook above were some time in finding their way down stream, at least in any quantity. Some 14 or 15 years ago, when the Louth and Lincoln railway line was being made, that pest of the trout stream—the otter—invaded the stream between Tathwell Pond (four miles from Louth) and Hubbard's Hill Valley, and killed an immense number of the trout. Fortunately, before the otters had completely depopulated the stream of the finny tribe, they wandered too far away from their haunts and the railway navvies, on coming to their work in the morning, found them in the half made railway cutting and cut off their escape to the stream and quickly despatched them with their spades. Mr. Hopper's youngest brother secured two of them as specimens, and had them stuffed by a local taxidermist, and he now has them in excellent preservation in glass cases. These ruthless and voracious quadruped fishermen thus summarily disposed of, the stream in a few seasons recovered its normal condition so far as containing plenty of fish. There has been a rumour this season that otters have again found their way to the stream, but what foundation there is for the rumour, Mr. Hopper cannot say.

1886.

II.—ABOUT CARP BREAM AND FRIEND BROWN'S DUCKING.

ANOTHER pest of trout streams is the heron, and particularly so in dry seasons such as 1884-5 and 6 have been. These long-necked thieves will strike a fish with unerring precision two feet below the surface of the water, and they will haunt a stream day by day. A great many frequent the Laceby and Little Coates stream, which runs into the Haven at Grimsby, and *last year* the writer heard of 21 of the species being seen together near the stream. Several fortunately fell victims to the fowling-piece. Mr. Hopper has had many good days' sport on the last-named stream, and it does not require a great stretch of memory to bring to his recollection baskets of $7\frac{1}{2}$, $8\frac{1}{2}$, 9, $10\frac{1}{2}$, and 11 brace of trout, all caught with the fly, the most successful being the stone fly, and following close upon it the March brown and alder. A few years ago, whilst spinning for trout in a Lincolnshire brook with the artificial "Derby killer," Mr. Hopper caught a fine dace which came at the bait in the most determined manner. It is, so far as he knows, an unprecedented thing for dace to take an artificial minnow. This year, when fishing on the Trent Mr. Hopper caught with a worm a barbel just pulling down the scale at 5lbs., and shortly afterwards he tried the spoon bait for perch in a rapid swim about seven feet deep. The first throw was responsible for a fairly-sized perch, and almost immediately after a stupid little barbel, with his barbs just beginning to show, was attracted by the glittering lure and made for it—his mouth was too small to take the spoon, but he foul-hooked himself on the treble hook, and weighed probably about 20z. He was at once returned to the water, and it is to be hoped will eschew such morsels until such times as he will better test an angler's tackle and skill.

Harking back for one moment to trout, it may not be generally known in Grimsby that *two local gentlemen*,

about Easter last year, placed a hundred yearling trout of about three or four inches in length in the Park lake. By July this year some of them had reached 10½ to 11 inches in length, and judging by the manner in which they have risen to the natural fly during the past summer evenings, they have thriven exceedingly well. Three gentlemen and the writer last year placed in another trout stream in the neighbourhood 4,500 trout fry, but there was so little water that it is feared they did not thrive well. The fry and also the yearlings before mentioned were purchased from Mr. Ford, of the Manor Fishery, Caistor, whose breeding ponds and hatching houses are full of interest and well worth a visit about February and March. He has some fine specimens in his ponds of the *Salmo Fario*, Loch Leven, and *Fontinalis*, the latter being, Mr. Hopper believes, the American brook trout, remarkable for its rapid growth and "playful" capacity when hooked. Last year, when fishing on the Trent, the writer saw a professional fisherman land, in about two hours, seven barbel weighing 42½ lbs. He was fishing 26 feet deep with what is known as a "tight" float, and the odds were about 3 to 1 that if he did not catch a barbel each time of throwing in he lost his tackle amongst the *debris* of the sunken barges which had been from time to time placed in various parts of the river by the Trent Commissioners to keep the banks up. The individual in question has fished the river at that particular spot, or within 50 or 60 yards, for about 30 years past, every morning for several months in the year, and he professes to know exactly where, under the influence of undercurrents and eddies, a worm thrown in the river from his boat will in the course of a few minutes be found, barring of course the possibility of having in the course of transit met with an untimely end from one of the monsters of the deep. Our friend, the piscatorial "professional," is one of the bibulous ones, so fishing with a "tight" float is a pleasant and congenial occupation. Last month he caught on night lines two fine eels, weighing respectively 7lbs. 6oz. and 6lbs. 7oz. The bane of Trent fishing is the flannel weed—if it be a dry summer and no heavy rains to cause a rise of water and flush the river, many swims are rendered unfishable by it.

Either in 1884 or 1885, Mr. Hopper forgets which, he was fishing, with a friend in a boat, a very fine pool in the Trent, when, a few minutes after one of the Trent navigation steamers had passed with several well-laden barges in tow, there was suddenly an immense upheaval of water in the centre of the pool, and what must have been many hundredweights, if not several tons, of flannel weed came to the surface of the water. Curious to state for quite half to three-quarters of a minute numerous fish of very large size were struggling in the eddies on the surface of the water. From enquiry made it was ascertained that the occurrence was not an unknown one in dry seasons; it is surmised that the flannel weed floats down the river until it reaches the deep pool alluded to and there accumulates in a huge mass, generating gases, until it makes a plunge upwards. No doubt the mass which rose to the surface in the manner described was caused to rise by the surging action of the water made by the steamer and barges which had just previously passed. Whether the fish were, so to speak, sucked in by the rapid ascent of such a mass of weed cannot be known, but it is not improbable that some of them would be feeding on the outskirts of the weed upon the fresh water shrimps with which it abounds, whilst others might at the moment be swimming immediately above the weed when it rose and be carried involuntarily to the surface. It is scarcely to be believed that they were voluntarily having a gambol in honour of the occasion, or yet that so many fish were all at once attracted by curiosity at the strange phenomenon taking place. The sudden upheaval of the water and the scene presented were altogether so curious that on the spur of the moment it was thought that there had been a small earthquake in the bed of the river. A tight float has already been mentioned—now a word or two for a “running float.” Carp bream are generally fished for with this kind of float. Mr. Hopper’s first experience of this float was three or four years ago upon a noted bream swim about 14 feet deep. An ardent Trent fisherman of 20 years experience, whom for the present purpose we will call Brown, and a friend called Witchdorter, accompanied Mr.

Hopper to the swim. The boat having been properly moored at the head of the swim, Brown instructed Witchdorter and the writer in the mystery of rigging up a running float and putting the "stop" in the proper place. This being completed, friend Brown said, "Now, I'll give them (meaning the carp bream) a few worms to see if they are here." Witchdorter remarked that he failed to see how he could give them the worms if they were not there to have them. Brown replied, "You wait and see, when they have had this cocoa-nut full," and forthwith he consigned to the depths beneath the struggling atoms of some 200 worms he had just ruthlessly cut up with his fishing scissors. Brown sent our floats on their first run, and when about 35 yards of the swim had been run over he said, "Now, wind up, and float the swim again." In the meantime he got ready his own rod, put on his running float, and commenced operations. About his second swim he said, "They're here," and immediately he struck and shortly there appeared a nice fish of two or three pounds weight. Others now followed in quick succession, but to cut matters short in three and a half hours Mr. Hopper had caught 20 carp bream, the smallest 1½lbs. and the largest 4lbs., the aggregate weight of the 20 being 50lbs.; friend Brown had caught 10 weighing about 30lbs.; and Witchdorter one only—it was his bad luck and not altogether his bad angling. However, he was not to be without his fun. Suddenly the head of a yokel appeared over the river bank and shouted to Brown, "You're wanted." Now, friend Brown picks up an honest copper in harvest time with measuring the work done by the reapers, so he must be put ashore. Witchdorter, a good and reliable boatman, said, "We need not pull up the stone, Brown, the rope is long enough to sheer the boat ashore." Brown, in confiding trustfulness, after some little remonstrance, consented to the proposal. Everything went well and happily until within six feet of the shore, when Brown said, "The rope won't reach; never mind, don't bother, I'll jump this." "No," said Witchdorter, don't do that, I can put you ashore." Brown, however, intent upon the coppers, went to the head of

the boat and jumped. Now, Brown is not slim, on the contrary, he carries weight—he did on this occasion; he failed to reach the shore, and the next seen of him just appearing above the water was a certain rotund portion of his frame. Witchdorter silently exploded. Brown in a few seconds found his way to the bank and stood there with about three stones weight of water in his clothes remonstrating with Witchdorter. Full of sympathy with Brown's pitiable plight, Mr. Hopper offered a few words of condolence, during which Brown disappeared over the river bank in high dudgeon. To fish again was useless. What with Brown's splash in the water and Witchdorter's merriment over the incident, the few fish left uncaught were scared away, and so ended the writer's first experience with a "running" float. To Brown's credit it must be mentioned that later in the day he appeared at the inn where we were staying and under the soothing influence of what was there provided he soon joined in as hearty a laugh over his plunge as Witchdorter had done at the time of the occurrence.

Before finishing with friend Brown, who is really a first-rate angler, a few words may here be added of Mr. Hopper's introduction to barbel fishing. Brown acted as godfather in that respect. After the writer had lost three fine barbel and tackle one afternoon Brown said, "You're a duffer at barbel fishing; let me show you how to land a barbel." "All right," was the reply. In about a quarter-of-an-hour a tremendous tug gave warning of another barbel. As soon as struck, away Mr. Barbel went until he had run out about 30 yards of line. Brown said, "Hand me your rod and let me show you how to play a barbel. I have been a barbel fisherman 20 years and never lost a barbel when I once fairly hooked him." The rod was handed over, and watch pulled out, and the time duly marked. Brown said, "My word though, this is a whopper. I have caught them up to 10lbs., but never a one like this; he weighs a stone at least." Presently Brown began to turn very pale, and was nervously excited. "I believe it's a salmon," said Brown. The details need not be filled in. At

the end of 25 minutes Brown said, "He's off," and sure enough he was. Pig-like, the fish had got down to the gravel and "rooted" his snout in it, worked out the hook, and got clear off. That was the first barbel Brown lost, but his artistic handling of the fish was a lesson to Mr. Hopper, who has since profited by it. Three years ago, on the Trent, the smallest barbel the writer caught was one that scaled 4lbs. 13oz. "Keep their heads up" is a good motto for barbel fishing. It is no good fishing for barbel without a previous ground baiting either of worms, cheese, or "scratching." Mr. Hopper prefers cheese, and it is certainly the cleanest to handle.

1886.

III.—BOBBINGMOON AND BULLS, MR. HOPPER'S DUCKING,
AND A VISIT TO DOVEDALE.

ANGLING, as defined in Johnson's dictionary, is "the art of fishing with a rod." This is a much fairer and unprejudiced definition than the "obiter dictum," which is attributed to Dr. Johnson, that "angling means a rod with a worm at one end and a fool at the other." Except by the ignorant and the uninitiated the latter definition is not in the least likely to be accepted as correct. Not only is angling an art requiring energy and skill, but unlimited patience is required for success. Mr. Hopper has already spoken of the fascination of the sport, and when once embarked in the enthusiasm of those who practice it is well known. Apart from the excitement of the sport, there are, to the lover of nature, the attractions of picturesque scenery which the country affords. There is also the bringing into play of the qualities of the mind, observation, and the reasoning faculties; also the enjoyment of fresh air and exercise, both of which are conducive to health.

"Though sluggards deem it but an idle chase,
And marvel men should quit their easy chair,
The toilsome way and long long league to trace;
Oh! there is sweetness in the mountain air,
And life that bloated ease can never hope to share.

Some people have asserted that angling is a cruel amusement, and Lord Byron would seem to have entertained this view when he wrote the following lines:—

"The quaint old cruel coxcomb in his gullet
Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull it."

Probably the artist was acquainted with these lines who drew the picture in *Punch*, of an old gentleman bobbing up and down in the water with a hook through his nose and at the other end of the line a hook in the jaw of a huge salmon which was struggling and pulling most vehemently and causing anything but pleasure to the old gentleman.

Patience has been already alluded to as necessary, so is good temper. Mr. Hopper once had his own fairly put to the test many years ago, when fishing on the

Ancholme. The day was oppressively hot and rendered still more trying by the swarms of midges which made their way into ears, eyes, mouth, and nostrils. A juvenile angler who would persist in throwing his line into the water "over-hand" accompanied the writer. He had no reel, and had fastened his line in the most primitive way on to the end of his rod. At last an unusually forcible throw flung the three top pieces of his rod nearly into mid-water, leaving the butt end in his hand. The disengaged portions made their way slowly over the river to the opposite bank. What was to be done? Mr. Hopper was not in those days too confident of his swimming powers, so he determined to recover the lost pieces by gaining the opposite bank by means of the nearest bridge. Accordingly we started off by the river bank in the glaring mid-day sun. The nearest bridge was just a mile and a half down the river, another mile and a half along the opposite bank up the river to where the rod lay made three miles, and to retrace our steps to the place where we had started from made three miles more—altogether six miles! May Mr. Hopper never have to do the like again! This was an episode in a day's fishing which went very much against the grain, and was naturally very trying to his temper. One's temper can be tried in other ways. The writer has a friend called Bobbingmoon. He is a careful man and of sure foothold, and never immerses himself in trout streams as it has been Mr. Hopper's unhappy lot to do on more occasions than one. Now Bobbingmoon will walk many hundred yards rather than venture a leap over the rippling brook. Whether it is that the leap shakes him or that he has not much confidence in his jumping abilities the writer cannot say, but Bobbingmoon will not jump. Mr. Hopper only knows of one thing in creation that will make Bobbingmoon even try to jump, and that is a bull. Bobbingmoon hates bulls; but bulls were not the cause of any of the writer's disastrous immersions—rashness alone was responsible.

A few years ago Mr. Hopper had, when in Bobbingmoon's company, a slip over the bank side which

resulted in immersion to the neck and a walk home of many miles in his dripping garments. Only a fortnight afterwards we were again by the brook side with our rods, and we agreed to separate for the distance of a mile or so. Bobbingmoon's parting advice was, "Now, Mr. Hopper, keep on the bank this time." "No fear," said the writer, who trudged his way along the stream feeling just a little bit insulted by Bobbingmoon's advice. Mr. Hopper reached the spot he was in search of—such a lovely place for a trout—a high bank with overhanging hawthorn bushes about four feet in height. The first cast of the fly towards the rising trout alighted on the outside edge of the bush overhanging the stream. Reach the fly Mr. Hopper could not. He is not heavy and ponderous like Bobbingmoon, and after carefully calculating the weight-carrying capacity of the bush, Mr. Hopper leaned quietly on the bush, it seemed tolerably secure and only to "give" a little, but the fly was still caught on a twig a few inches from his outstretched hand. The further the writer stretched the more the bush seemed to "give." Mr. Hopper was now beyond his balance, but he grasped the fly and over he went heels over head many feet into the rippling stream below. Draggletailed, Mr. Hopper pulled himself on to the bank which Bobbingmoon had cautioned him not to leave. Horror of horrors! What if Bobbingmoon should come up and find Mr. Hopper in such a plight. Now Bobbingmoon is a splendid fellow, but given to chaff. Mr. Hopper felt, after the sound advice tendered, that he could not stand Bobbingmoon's shots, so made off for the nearest railway station, some miles away, where a friendly train soon carried him home. Mr. Hopper has had several narrow escapes since, and he is beginning to think that he justifies the appellation of a "clumsy fellow" which Bobbingmoon has bestowed upon him. Bobbingmoon is too good a fellow to be parted with just at present. He has a "gentle touch" when fishing, in fact his sense of touch is so exquisite that if a trout wags its tail in the vicinity of his minnow he declares he has had a "touch." He is, however, notwithstanding his delicate "touch" and his

horror of bulls, a good fisherman and a downright good-hearted fellow, and the best of companions on a fishing expedition. Two years ago he obtained "permits" for some trout fishing in Derbyshire. It was at the end of May, and we started from Grimsby by an early train in exuberant spirits and full of anticipation of good sport. Bobbingmoon and the writer arrived at Derby in due course where we took out our fishing licences for the Trent fishery district, and from there drove to Ashbourne where we visited Foster's tackle shop and picked up such wrinkles as we thought would be useful for the Derbyshire waters. We then looked in—as all visitors to the town do—at the quaint old inn and inspected its curiosities, and then proceeded with our drive to the Izaak Walton hotel. Bobbingmoon is a bit of a botanist and fern-seeker, and our journey was somewhat lengthened by his numerous descents from the trap to collect specimens for Mrs. Bobbingmoon "just to show her, Mr. Hopper, that I have not forgotten her." In due course we arrived at the hotel, which is situated at a short distance only from the entrance to Dovedale. To our dismay we found on our arrival a cold east wind blowing, which Bobbingmoon rightly predicted would prevent the May fly being on the water. Having satisfied the cravings of the inner man and booked our beds, we put up our fly rods and proceeded to the riverside, but not a trout could we rise. The water was low and as clear as crystal, and the keepers said it was useless fishing under such conditions, and we found they were right although we persevered with good heart until the shades of evening set in and we then returned to the hotel and smoked the "calumet" with mine host, whom Bobbingmoon much enlivened by the recital of his piscatorial exploits in the Fen and Wold country. The next morning we were up betimes, and having forwarded our luggage to Hartington we started with our rods through Dovedale—a lovely walk this, but not a "rise" could we get except out of some sheep-washers upon whom Bobbingmoon was lavish with his jokes. Through Dovedale and other dales we strode along, but not a "touch" could either

the exquisite Bobbingmoon or Mr. Hopper get from the weary trout, and so on to the "Charles Cotton,"—a glorious old fishing inn—at Hartington, where we remained the night. Next morning we drove to Bakewell, famous for its puddings—but the pudding happens to be a cake. Having landed our belongings at the Rutland Arms, we then wended our way to the valley of the Wye, just below Haddon Hall—a grand old relic of days gone by. We flogged the water without result except that the writer caught a swallow in the wing with his artificial fly just as he was drawing his line from the water. Mr. Hopper released it as soon as he could get his line in and away it flew apparently none the worse. Empty creels again made Bobbingmoon dispirited, and led both of us to draw comparisons between our Lincolnshire streams and the Wye, Dove, and Derwent, which were not favourable to the latter rivers. Next morning the wind was still in the East, so we paid Buxton a visit and saw its beautiful winter garden, and then wended our way back to Grimsby without one fish to save our angling reputations and decidedly lighter in pocket than when we left home. Bobbingmoon has several times since pressed the writer to revisit Derbyshire, but not Mr. Hopper. It will take more than two years to efface from Mr. Hopper's, and he may add Mrs. Hopper's, memory the disastrous and lamentable failure of his own and Bobbingmoon's visit to Derbyshire. The writer made his peace with Mrs. Hopper on his arrival home with some Buxton spas he had judiciously purchased, but Bobbingmoon's domestic reception must have been awful.

IV.—WITCHDORTER, AND BOBBINGMOON'S SALMON.

MR. Hopper's first pike! but what did it weigh? and how did you catch it? are questions which naturally suggest themselves to his readers. Well, it was not a big fish, it only weighed $3\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., but in Mr. Hopper's juvenile eyes it was a veritable monster, and quite put in the shade any fish ever caught by the ancient "Izaak." Now for the answer to the second of the above questions. In those days Mr. Hopper was very small, and he looked upon the pike as being nearly as big as himself. However, the writer was not considered too small to be denied the privilege of making one at a picnic at Well Vale, near Alford. Mr. Hopper supposes, also because he was so small, the privilege, denied to others, was extended to him of fishing in the lake, and he had taken his rod on the off chance of being allowed to fish—for even in those early days the passion was strong upon Mr. Hopper—and the then proprietor of Well Vale accorded the writer the permission with the restriction that he was not to fish for pike. It was wholly unnecessary to impose such a restriction, as in those days Mr. Hopper looked upon pike very much in the nature of fresh water sharks, and quite ready to eat a little boy if opportunity arose. It was a summer's day with frequent showers, from which, when they came on, the writer took refuge under some trees a little distance from his rod. As evening came on, Mr. Hopper returned to his rod after a somewhat longer absence than usual. On taking it up he found a small perch of about 2oz. in weight had hooked himself, and boy like Mr. Hopper kept throwing him in the water to see him "bob" the float. All at once the float went away with a tremendous run, and Mr. Hopper held on like grim death to his rod. Tug, tug, tug, came in rapid succession, and the writer was like to have been dragged into the lake to an untimely end. Not an inch of line was given and after a few minutes

desperate pulling the resistance gradually grew less, and Master Pike was drawn to the side. He lay gasping on the green turf with the small roach hook with which the writer had been fishing through his upper lip. What became of the perch Mr. Hopper never knew. How he got that hook out he altogether forgets. Mr. Hopper does remember that a huge mouth with formidable-looking teeth and malicious eyes confronted him whenever he approached to extract the barb. That Mr. Hopper did succeed in some manner or other in performing the delicate and dangerous operation is certain, as he remembers quite well wrapping up the pike in his great coat and rushing past the Hall calling out many times at the top of his voice "I've caught a pike." Mr. Hopper was utterly regardless of having in a sense broken the stipulation under which he had been allowed to fish, but then he looked upon the capture as entirely due to accident. It was a proud moment of the writer's life when hot and steaming he reached the rendezvous of the other picnickers and unfolded his great coat and displayed to their astonished eyes his three-and-a-half pound capture.

Mr. Hopper believes it is an unusual thing for pike to take perch when feeding, and if the perch went down his gullet it is reckoned Master Pike had a rough time of it from the perch's back fin until nature put an end to their respective sufferings. An incident of this kind happening in one's early days makes a great impression upon the juvenile mind and is ever afterwards vividly present in the mind of the "piscator." Mr. Hopper once had a big brother—he has now—but in the days he is about to speak of he was *the* big brother. Many times he went fishing before he brought to bank a single fish and every fisherman knows with what pride a juvenile angler carries home the first proof of his prowess. At last that happy day arrived. Mr. Hopper's big brother had gone to sleep on the bank (it was in the days of Aylesby Mill) and having in due course awoke from his slumbers and pulled up his rod he found a roach secure on the hook. Oh! joy of joys! with what fond pride would it be carried home; but before committing it

to the creel the poor little wretch must be treated to the water once or twice again to bob the float and to make believe that he was going to be restored to his native element. Like the pitcher taken to the well, the roach was consigned to the water once too often and he disengaged himself from the odious hook, and the juvenile angler had to go home once more with an empty creel. Mr. Hopper will leave his readers to picture to themselves the angler's crestfallen demeanour on having to tell that at last he had caught a fish but that it had got off again. How incredulous such a story would appear, and how the big one would insist upon its entire truth. Mr. Hopper believes he now says that he would have caught fish much sooner than he did but a big cousin used to fit him out with a very big hook much too large for roach, and that it was only when he was supplied with a small hook that he hooked his first fish.

The writer will now record some reminiscences of a more recent period. Bobbingmoon is and has for many years been very anxious to "play" a salmon; he had that pleasure for a brief space of time two or three years ago when in Wales, but of course the king of fish managed to get the line round a sharp rock and severed the connecting link between itself and its would-be capturer. Bobbingmoon on this occasion ran imminent risk of immersion, but after the advice so frequently given to Mr. Hopper to keep on the bank he could not consistently take a plunge. Bobbingmoon had no further opportunity when in Wales of putting to the test his gentle touch, so that attribute of his is reserved in its unimpaired integrity until some day in the future when *Salmo Ferox*, Esq. (an *alias* of Bobbingmoon's) will be really justified in saying that he has had a touch from a twenty-pounder.

Mr. Hopper remembers a couple of years ago being with Bobbingmoon and Witchdorter on the Trent patiently waiting for the fish to be "on the feed." A hundred yards below us a salmon "picked" right out of the water—it was evidently coming up stream and in less than a minute it leapt out of the water about four or five feet below the stern of the boat, which being moored had its head up stream, and it all

but landed in the boat in our midst, as it was it hit its nose with great force on the stem of the boat and caused it to shake again. Bobbingmoon was thrown into a great state of excitement, whilst Witchdorter, more impassive and practical, simply deplored the fact that the fish had not landed itself into the boat so that we could at our next meal have partaken of a succulent steak from its massive back. Bobbingmoon was not to be quieted. He was salmon mad. Bream, barbel, and all other Trent fish at once sunk into utter insignificance, and he was not to be pacified until he had a real Trent salmon in play. What a splendid opportunity now presented itself! Whilst Bobbingmoon was still at fever heat the salmon netters were observed just drawing the pool in the reach above us—in fact they were just drawing the nets to the side and from the splashing in the water it was clear that they had a fair-sized fish in the meshes. Bobbingmoon was determined to buy the fish, so he was put ashore (not quite in the same way as Witchdorter had manipulated friend Brown to the bank side) and hastened to bargain for the fish whilst still alive so that he might put it on his hook and have some real salmon play. It has already been explained that Bobbingmoon is ponderous and not fleet of foot, and there was no bull at hand to hasten his movements, and though he gesticulated wildly to attract the attention of the netters he failed to gain their ear, and just as he got within hailing distance the mallet descended on poor salmo's head, and, as he arrived on the scene, it lay quivering in its last struggles on the bank, so Bobbingmoon was robbed of the sport he had so much at heart. Crestfallen, disappointed, and out of breath Bobbingmoon returned to the boat declaring that he would have given 18s. (which represented the price of the fish at 1s. per lb.) for the privilege of returning it to the water with his hook securely fixed in his jaw. Witchdorter pointed out to Bobbingmoon that 18s. was a lot of money to pay for *putting* a fish on the hook and playing it at the risk of losing it, and he also read Bobbingmoon a moral lecture on the enormity of playing a salmon when he had no licence to angle for that fish, and he also threatened that had Bobbingmoon

returned the fish to the water with an implement of torture like a hook fastened in an unnatural way in its jaw he would not have hesitated to have given him in charge of the first water bailiff he met with, or failing that to have communicated the facts to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. It was in vain that Bobbingmoon insisted that a salmon was not an animal, and consequently was not within the scope of the Society's good intentions and operations. Witchdorter insisted, that animal or no animal, it would have been clearly a case which the Society, in the interests of humanity and the enforcement of fair angling, would have taken up and prosecuted to the utmost of their resources, but Bobbingmoon would have none of it. A wordy war ensued, when Mr. Hopper interposed and pointed out what by this time in the heat of argument they had both forgotten, viz., that the salmon was dead, and that all their discussion and argument were of no avail and so much loss of vital energy, and like sensible men as they both generally are they agreed to differ and resumed the sport which the leap of the salmon had temporarily disturbed.

V.—CHIEFLY ABOUT GRAYLING, ALSO A DAY'S FISHING
ON THE ANCHOLME.

IN Mr. Hopper's last series of angling notes he endeavoured to pourtray Bobbingmoon's intense excitement over the salmon's near leap into our boat. It was certainly an allowable excitement, as the little village which we annually make our fishing resort is certainly quiet and "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife." Bobbingmoon can manage to exist a couple of days there if the fish are biting, but there is not enough "go" there for Mrs. Bobbingmoon. She did once pay us a visit there, but she ironically declared that the place was altogether too "fast" for her, and that if she remained there a week the late hours and amount of society would be the death of her. Mrs. Hopper was at first inclined to agree with her, but with a little management Mr. Hopper can now coax her into a fortnight's stay there every year with the little Hoppers. Witchdorter thinks the resort a perfect elysium, but so long as he can lie in a boat with his hat over his eyes in the broiling sun and with a pipe in his mouth he is in perfect happiness. The little Witchdorters out-number the little Hoppers, and are altogether too numerous a colony to translate to the happy village, so Mrs. Witchdorter has hitherto remained at home to take care of the little Witchdorters during their paternal's absence. But to talk of the little Witchdorters, the Hopper olive branches, and Bobbingmoon's better half is not angling talk, so the writer will rake up other experiences and reminiscences.

One more word about Trent salmon. Mr. Hopper has never heard of one being caught with the artificial fly, but they are sometimes taken with the worm when bottom fishing for bream and barbel. Last year a gentleman of Mr. Hopper's acquaintance was fishing in the Trent from a flat-bottomed punt (one-third at each end of the punt being boarded

over and there being a shallow well in the centre) when a large salmon "picked" out of the water and landed right on one of the ends boarded over, and was cutting his capers there in fine style for several seconds. The angler and his groom (who accompanied him) both made a dash for the bold visitor and the latter actually got hold of him and tried to pull him into the well of the boat, but he was so strong and full of dance and caper that he prevented them from carrying out their design, and proved too slippery a customer by making a huge bound again into the river, where, it is almost needless to remark, his would-be capturers did not follow him. In some seasons a great many salmon make their way up the Trent, and Mr. Hopper has known them leap out of the water all round the boat in which he has been fishing. Barbel also "pick" out of the water, but after a little time it is easy to distinguish which species of fish it is that is leaping.

There is some excellent chub fishing in the Trent by the side of the willows, which in many places overhang the river. Greaves, wasp grub, and artificial fly are all good lures, but Mr. Hopper had his first try for them with his trout fly rod and a large "sweep" fly. The legs of this fly are made of black hackle, which should be as long as the body of the fly and extra thick and bushy, the body of black ostrich herl and the tail of the same, white or satin-coloured. The fly should be dressed on a No. 10 hook. Having described the fly, Mr. Hopper will now tell of his first chub. Witchdorter, who has been already referred to as a good and reliable boatman, dropped the boat gently down stream to some likely looking willows, and having got out a nice long line Mr. Hopper commenced operations. One of his early casts was responsible for a nicely-sized dace, and presently he saw just a small "boil" of the water simultaneously with the fly alighting on the surface. It is better in fly fishing for chub to be rather slow than quick in striking, so the writer gave the leather-mouthed rascal fair time and then struck. Chub like, feeling himself hooked, he made a rush for the willow roots which with some difficulty was checked, as the rod was very "whippy," and he

then, when Mr. Hopper had got some of his line in, made a determined rush under the boat. The tackle was, however, too good, and after a good fight he found himself in the meshes of the landing net, and pulled down the scale at 1½lbs. He was not a large specimen, as chub in the Trent occasionally run up to five and six pounds weight, but he was a remarkably game fish and gave no end of play.

Mr. Hopper's first grayling also weighed 1½lbs., he captured it with the fly in the Withern stream below Tickler's mill. Grayling have very tender mouths and require very careful handling. They offer a strong and obstinate resistance—not like the fiery rush of the trout, but a long and steady pull. It was nearly dark when the writer hooked the one he has referred to and he gave nearly a quarter of an hour's play, and Mrs. Hopper, who was staying overnight at Withern, successfully brought him to bank in the landing net. The dorsal fin of the grayling is spotted, the spots being arranged in lines across the fin, which when pressed is very pretty and makes a very presentable memento of one's capture. Mr. Hopper cut the fin off the grayling in question and still has it in an excellent state of preservation, it measures 14½ inches in circumference, and the various colours are as well defined as when caught six years ago. When newly caught grayling have an odour very much resembling that of wild thyme. It is greatly esteemed for the table, and there is a prevalent supposition (how far supported by any reliable evidence Mr. Hopper cannot tell) that it was brought to England by the monks, who it is pretty well known were partial to good feeding. The writer has known grayling caught in the Withern stream up to 3lbs. weight.

As a rule trout and grayling do not thrive well together in a stream, the latter have the reputation of being rather a greedy fish and securing the best feeding pools and deep corners for themselves. Anyhow, in most places where trout and grayling are in the same stream the latter greatly outnumber the former. Mr. Hopper does not know of any stream containing grayling nearer Grimsby than the Claythorpe and Withern

Beck and it is believed to be strictly preserved. The one advantage of having grayling in a trout stream is that they afford sport during the winter months. Trout fishing goes out on the 1st October, and grayling are then getting nicely in condition, their close season being the same as coarse fish, viz., 15th March to 15th June. They spawn in April and May. Mr. Hopper has given a long account of the grayling as it is a fish that few Grimsby anglers have tried their hands at, but the writer will now leave him and record a curious day's fishing this season on the Ancholme. A fellow angler and Mr. Hopper fished a short distance above Horkstow bridge. We had a miserable day's sport, only capturing fifteen of the finny tribe altogether, but out of the first ten fish there were eight varieties, viz., white bream, perch, dace, roach, Tommy Ruffe, gudgeon, eel, and whitling. The writer doubts if any one of the fish weighed three ounces, whereas in the very place where we were fishing Mr. Hopper's fellow angler had caught, the week previously, 16lbs. of roach, four of them scaling 3½lbs. and on previous occasions had caught carp bream up to 5lbs. each. However, every angler knows that fish will not bite on some days, and perhaps it is as well, for undoubtedly the uncertainty adds to the excitement and charm of the sport.

VI.—WITCHDORTER AND "PELLEWEWS"—BOWLINGGREEN
 TWYNKLES AND "A DAY'S CHUBBING"—MASTER HOPPER'S
 6-LB. BARBEL—MR. HOPPER'S 8-LB. BARBEL—AND MISS
 HOPPER AND THE WORMS AND POULTRY.

"ANY pellylews about here, boy?" asked an angler a few years ago of a Trent-side yokel. "Oi doant know whoat thee meerns," replied the rubicund one. And Mr. Hopper doesn't suppose the enquirer or any one else on Trent-side knew what was meant, for pellylews be a "werry scarce animile in this 'ere globe." Mr. Yokel, however, has had his revenge each year since, as "Ony pellylews, maister?" greets the ear when Mr. Hopper seeks what should be the refreshing and well-earned quiet of the angling retreat so dear to himself and his friend Witchdorter. Imagine the scene—Witchdorter half asleep in the boat in a blazing July sun, his pipe-bowl resting between his waistcoat and flannel shirt (the tobacco gently smouldering the latter), and the mouth-piece well lodged in his ear, your humble servant, Mr. Hopper, intent upon his float, when suddenly Mr. Yokel pops his head over the bank and with stentorian lungs roars out, "Ony pellylews, maister?" Pellylews be blowed, says Mr. Hopper, whilst Witchdorter, roused from his half-somnolent state, lunges out viciously with his left leg and catches Mr. Hopper a severe kick in the small of the back, which applications of Jacob's Oil, Bates' salve, Sequah's rubbing embrocation, arnica, Harness's electric belt, opodeldoc, and other well-known remedies are powerless to cope with. Witchdorter apologises, and explains that he was dreaming he was keeping goal for Grimsby Town against Lincoln City or Blackburn Rovers, and was kicking out of goal. Now, Witchdorter has a foot—most of us have two; but his left foot is a caution when sent out in his own peculiar fashion. Mr. Hopper has the impression of that foot from his

left shoulder-blade down to—well we will say considerably lower down—and all through that yokel pellylewing over Trent bank-side.

Mr. Hopper can now imagine his readers have had enough of the pellylew business, and they want to know what sport Mr. Hopper has had since he wrote his last notes. Well, Mr. Hopper has certainly grassed some real good ones since he last put pen to paper anent angling matters, but first let him record the demise last autumn of Charlie Hudson, the Trent fisherman, who could fish for carp bream as no other angler could do. Poor old Charlie! he *was* good at his beer. "Well, maister, I don't mind a sup;" that there "sup" meaning two glasses to begin with. When Charlie had put out of sight about ten more of the same measure he would confidentially tell you "he worn't a good hand at his beer now, he couldn't take it." Witchdorter, from the stern of the boat, tips a sly wink at this, and affirms that he is a bibulous old rascal. But Charlie has gone to his rest. Last harvest home polished him off. If he had stuck to his beer he would probably now have been pulling out carp bream of four or five pounds weight, and saying, "This 'ere ain't no putty un," meaning a white bream. Whisky finished him off in about a couple of days, and Trent-side knows him no more. "Friend Brown" purchased Charlie's boat, and many a pull and many a row has Mr. Hopper had with it last back end and this changeable summer (?) of 1890. Well, but Mr. Hopper, what about the fish? Some rare business in the barbel line this year's visit; biggest 8lbs. Nonsense, say Mr. Hopper's readers. Bosh! Five-and-a-half pounds took first prize last year for biggest barbel caught in public waters. Well, it's a fact. Mr. Hopper hooked him at 9 p.m., and it was 9-25 p.m. before he was safe in the net. A real beauty; in splendid condition; and he fought like the—brave fish he was. What did you catch him with, Mr. Hopper? Why cheese, of course. Do you think Mr. Hopper fishes with worm when the water is fine and clear? Any other good barbel, Mr. Hopper? Well, yes. Master Hopper, rising 16, landed one the same night pulling down the

scale at 6lbs., and right well he played it. Any others, Mr. Hopper? Oh, yes. Another 5½lbs., and lots of others from 3 to 4lbs. in weight, and smashed times and times again. One beauty, perfect in shape and condition, weight 3½lbs., succumbed in a sharp current, six feet deep, to the gentle. Quill float, fishing with very fine tackle and small roach hook, and rod of five pieces, only 8oz. in weight, brought about the death of this nice fish whilst fishing for dace, and he required very delicate handling of twenty minutes duration before he was safely in the landing-net. For the first fifteen minutes he was never nearer than twenty yards, so gallantly and bravely did he fight, but his powers of endurance then gradually gave way, and, giving him plenty of butt, in five minutes more he threw up the sponge. This pretty specimen, along with the six-pounder already mentioned, and another of 3lbs., was brought home alive in a fish trunk to be placed in the Cleethorpes Aquarium, but unfortunately, owing to being so knocked about by the motion of the railway van, and the inability to procure change of water during the journey, all three fish succumbed the same evening of their arrival at the Aquarium. Mr. Hopper has heard, but he cannot state it as a fact, that the six-pounder has been stuffed and set up, and is or will be on view at the Aquarium. It should be mentioned that one of these fish had been caught on the Monday and the other two on the Tuesday previous to the Saturday on which they were brought home, and having been kept alive in the Trent in a fish trunk with perforated holes, they were probably not so heavy on arrival, or so full of vitality, as when caught. Many Grimsby anglers have probably never seen a barbel, so if they visit the Aquarium for the purpose, they must please take note of his enormous tail, his short but powerful dorsal and anal fins, and they will then appreciate the enormous leverage they give him in the water and powers of resistance to the angler's skill and tackle.

Three years ago Mr. Hopper baited a swim with cheese, and with his nephew, a lanky lad of 6ft. 1in., got up the next morning at four o'clock to fish it. On arrival at

the ferry landing stage it was found that some scamp had, during the night, taken the small boat across the river and left it there—the best part of 100 yards away. Now, as the baited swim was nearly a mile up the river, and on the other side, and was only fishable from a boat, it was absolutely necessary to get to the boat. After a council of war, during which Mr. Hopper felt his muscles, it was determined to venture upon getting the big horse-boat across the river—(a big undertaking this)—and, if successful in that venture, to leave his nephew on the other side to bring the small boat across whilst he returned with the horse-boat. Mr. Hopper navigated the unwieldy craft across with a pole more like a fir tree than anything, and having deposited his nephew on *terra firma* on the opposite side, proceeded to return and had successfully negotiated half the voyage across the river when having stuck the aforesaid fir tree too deeply in the mud, it became a question with Mr. Hopper whether the propelling apparatus should be left in the middle of the river, or whether he should cling like grim death thereto with the inevitable result, having regard to the *way* there was on the boat, that Mr. Hopper should be dragged off the boat into the river and so add one more to his unlucky dips. The bump of caution must have been largely developed that morning, for the former course was carried out, and the pole was left sticking in the middle of the river, and the craft with Captain Hopper on board just reached the home side of the river. “Uncle Hopper,” says his nephew, “I can’t move this boat; the river has fallen in the night and left it almost high and dry.” Here was a dilemma. One would-be angler on one side of the river, and the other on t’other side. Master Nephew pushed and lunged, and spluttered and called upon the holy saints, and pushed and lunged again, but all in vain. “Take your clothes off, nephew, and get in the river, and then you’ll manage it.” Nephew, slightly irritated at this advice, rejoins, “Do it yourself, Uncle Hopper.” The precious time was of course running away like mad, and eventually Master Nephew was soothed into a compromise of divesting himself of boots and socks and rolling his trousers up to his hips, and so accoutred,

and with further invocations to the aforesaid saints, and further desperate lunges, he managed to get her afloat and brought her across, picking up the fir tree on his way, and at a quarter to six—it should have been half-past four—landed his Uncle at the swim.

"Now be very quiet, Nephew, and although rather late, we are in for the barbel this morning." Having rigged up a running float and adjusted a tempting morsel of cheese on the hook, in went Mr. Hopper's line and bait, down goes the float, and "Uncle" has hold at once. "My word, though, nephew," says he, "there'll be sport this morning." "Golly, Uncle," says Nephew, "we're in for a catch this morning." Says Uncle, "We shall get a sack full before breakfast, as sure as fate." Meanwhile Mr. Fish has been giving good play, but of a peculiar kind, and in due course the net is put under him and Nephew duly deposits a fish of 3½lbs. into the aforesaid capacious sack. Half-an-hour elapses without another bite, which passes the comprehension of Mr. Hopper, who says "Nephew, did you look at that fish to see what it was? It occurs to me, now I come to think of it, he didn't play like a barbel. Turn him out, and let's have a look at him." This being done, it is found, to the mutual disgust of uncle and nephew, that it is a chub. A handsome fellow certainly, but still a leather-mouthed chub only, and not a barbel. Simply a roaming chub, and not one of a drove of barbel. This at once explained the absence of further bites, and having been again consigned to his sack he there remained in solitary confinement for the remainder of the morning until breakfast time, for not another bite could be got. When fishing for barbel that visit Mr. Hopper caught, in another swim, two more chub, respectively weighing 2½lbs. and 1½lbs.—not bad fish, certainly, but very different from barbel.

When fishing after dark on the Trent, bats are a great nuisance; the line being held taut, the slightest touch or friction is felt, and a bat having once found your line persists in flying against it, which causes a good jerk or knock not unlike a bite. Blow the bats, says Mr

Hopper. Now, fellow anglers, have you ever been chubbing? If not, take friendly counsel of Mr. Hopper and another mate of his called Bowlinggreen Twynkles. What a funny name! you will exclaim; but still it's right. His father's name was, as you will guess, Twynkles, and as his mother was a direct lineal descendant of that famous naval commander who was once engaged, shortly before a naval encounter, in playing a game of bowls, his parents fastened upon him the ever-endearing name of "Bowlinggreen" as his christian name. Now Twynkles is a grand fisherman, and as he had never fished the Trent friend Brown said "Let's go chubbing to-morrow." "What's chubbing?" said Twynkles. "Oh; I'll show you to-morrow," said Brown, and, he added, "The river's grand for chubbing." Mr. Hopper suggested it was also grand for a bit of bream fishing. "Nonsense, man alive," says Brown, "too much colour and too high." Twynkles and Mr. Hopper submitted to friend Brown's superior judgment, and, being October, it was arranged to leave at half-past eight next morning. Punctual to time, up river, Twynkles, Brown, and Mr. Hopper started. Brown towed, and then Mr. Hopper towed, whilst Twynkles calmly guided the boat from the stern and smoked his calumet. Now Messrs. Twynkles and Hopper each have patience, but the stock began to be drawn on when at a quarter to eleven the latter mildly inquired of Brown when the "chubbing" was going to commence. "Not yet," says Brown. So we proceeded until a quarter past eleven. Twynkles ventured to hazard a question if we were nearly there. "Soon be there," said Brown. "You see that big chimney and the mill beyond? no good starting 'chubbing' until we get there." Twynkles sighed, looked in despair at Mr. Hopper, and cast a withering glance at Brown on the bank. Presently Brown said, "That's Sutton church there on the right." "Is it?" said Twynkles. "Is that where you chub?" "No," says Brown, "a bit further yet." Twelve o'clock came, and Mr. Hopper inquired how far the mill was away. "About a mile or a mile and a half," says Brown. "Well," says Mr. Hopper, "that means another hour, and the best part of the

day will be gone, and not another yard will I go." Twynkles was equally obdurate, and said, "Let's start chubbing." "By the way, what are those two fellows doing on the bank?" This to Brown. "Oh, they're chubbing," replied Brown?" "Are they?" said Twynkles in rather mournful tones. "Do you catch fish when you go chubbing, Brown?" "Oh, certainly," says Brown, "real pluggers; regular whoppers on a day like this." We accordingly moored the boat and rigged up our rods and started chubbing. We chubbed a long time without a bite. "Is this chubbing?" ventured Twynkles. "Yes," said Brown, "but the fish haven't found what we've thrown in." Another twenty minutes passed without result. Says Twynkles to Brown, "Do you think there are any chub in this swim?" "Well, probably not," says Brown, "let's try a bit lower down we shall find them soon." We did try them lower down, and still lower. Three o'clock had now arrived and no pluggers which Brown had spoken of. "Do you call this a day's chubbing, Brown?" said Twynkles. "Yes," says Brown, "the outing will do you good, even if you haven't caught fish." "Blow your chubbing," says Twynkles, and so says Mr. Hopper, for not a single fish did this chubbing expedition bring. Brown couldn't understand it. He had been chubbing so many times without a blank day. Twynkles smiled a faint incredulous smile, and—let us draw the curtain over what still lingers in one's memory of this day's chubbing.

"Do you frequently use worms for fishing on the Trent?" said an angler who had never fished that river. "Oh, yes," said Mr. Hopper, "any amount. I get bags of 1000 and 2000 at a time from Stephen Dale, of Nottingham, who always supplies me well." This subject of worms brings to mind a little incident. After Mr. Hopper had been a few days at his Trent-side retreat he observed that his landlady's ducks and fowls were getting uncommonly fat. It also occurred to him that his supply of worms ran short somewhat more quickly than should be, but still his unsuspicious mind did not connect that event with the fat ducks and fowls. These went on fattening until they could scarcely walk. Can it

be believed that a traitor was found in the home nest. Now Mr. Hopper has a family—one thereof is little Miss Hopper, who is very fond of pets of all kinds. To be short, the aforesaid Miss Hopper had been daily feeding mine host's poultry on the best and plumpest selections she could make from Mr. Hopper's precious store of worms. This discovery having been made, and extra precautions taken to prevent such depredations in future, the poultry shortly resumed their normal appearance and activity.

1890.

VII.—AN INVITATION FROM A LINCOLNSHIRE BARONET.

“Lincolnshire, 4th September, 1890.

“**D**EAR MR. HOPPER,—I should like you, that young 6lb. barbel catcher, and your friends, Herr Otto von Krozz and Mr. Humber, to come and have a day's fishing in my ponds next Saturday. Your other angling mates, Bobbingmoon, Twynkles, and Witchdorter, will not, I am sure, care to come; but I can understand Bobbingmoon's objection to pond fishing, after being accustomed for upwards of fifty years to river and stream fishing. Twynkles too, of course, could not drag himself from the bowling-green, but had he come I should only have been too pleased to play him 21 up on the bit of grass in front of my little shanty. Witchdorter's objections, I know, are due to conscientious scruples as to fishing on a Saturday, he being occupied in quiet preparations for the Sabbath. I entertain the same feelings myself. Fishing on a Saturday causes ones thoughts to wander away to the grossly material ideas and pleasures of the world. Shooting is so entirely different, as ones thoughts become concentrated on the sport actually being enjoyed at the time. But watching a float—well, one's thoughts *will* wander, and not always in the proper channel. Tell young barbel catcher to bring his rifle, as we have some nice dab chicks on my bit of water, and so long as he doesn't interfere with the other water-fowl, my good old lady won't complain, but take it from me, friend Hopper, she'll duck him if a stray shot goes among her poultry. Yes, it was right; 194 bream, the smallest 3½lbs., but, blow the chaps, they couldn't carry them away when they had caught them, and had to borrow one of my wagons and team of horses out of the harvest field to take the catch home with them. I wish you plenty of sport, but hope you won't repeat the dose. I probably shall not be able to drop down upon you until after noon, as we go out with our harriers

at six o'clock a.m. for a hare for our Sunday dinner. Then breakfast, and then three hours in the turnips for a few partridges. We are homely people and dine at half-past one, and this hot weather we dance on the lawn from half-past two until half-past four, but you needn't bring your dress togs, although we shall be pleased for you to take a hop with us. After that we all bathe in the lake, so please take your angling apparatus then to the lower lake, where, if you like, you have my permission to take a dip. It's not very dangerous, being only about a foot of water and seven of deposit—call it mud if you like. By-the-bye, I forgot to say that when the family's shooting we lock up the house, and take the butler and other waiter chaps with us to carry the game. I will, therefore, leave the cellar key under the scraper, so you can go in and help yourselves to any fluids you find there. I mention this as, although the pond water is all right for bathing, I shouldn't think it's right for drinking purposes if you get dry. I haven't tried it myself, and I wouldn't advise you. It seems to suit the fish and poultry, but it is a bit green down at the lower end. I'll send the drawing-room sofa and a few lounges down to the water side, in case you want a nap in the heat of the day, and if you want a round game you'll find an old pack in the summer-house. By the way—about the dancing. We shall be short of music, as the piano went by the carrier's cart this morning to our nearest town to be tuned. Tell friend Humber, who I know is a bit of a musical chap, to bring his 'cello with him and he can give us a tune whilst we dance, and it will be useful when you go home for him to carry his bream in. I hope he won't *carp* at this suggestion. I suppose you will be ploughing next Wednesday, so I shan't see you at Doncaster. Now, Mr. Hopper, good-bye until we meet.

Yours piscatorially,

_____."

"P.S.—Please excuse this short letter."

But, Mr. Hopper, whom is the letter from? He has forgotten to sign his name. Well, that's just it; Mr. Hopper wants to know. If you had received a letter like the above, doubtless

you would have concluded it was an invite for you to go fishing, and you would have gone to the place where you thought the letter was from? Therefore we went, and to cut matters short we found after all that it was a "take in," and that the letter was not from him. He was, however, very pleased to see us, and seemed to think it was a good joke—I mean the letter, and our going without an invite. He put no restrictions upon us as to the fish we might catch. Well, what should friend Humber do but straightway go and pull a seven pound pike out! Of course he did not lift him right out of the water, but after about a quarter of an hour's play he brought him to the side, and our friend Hot Cross (short for Otto von Krozz, who was born on Good Friday) carefully manipulated him into the net, into which he nearly dropped by reason of over-balancing himself on the wall which skirts one side of the lake. However, the distinguished foreigner was pulled back by his heels, and so prevented from polluting this historic bathing place. The only honourable course to take was to send the fish up to the house with an expression of sincere regret that the pike should have been so misguided as to take the live roach, which of course was only intended for a big eel. Who would ever think of a pike taking a live roach! Were there any wopses there, Mr. Hopper? Well, just a few! Whilst you were picking one out from between your collar and neck, another would be part of the way up to your knee. And ain't they fond of bream! Oh, my! they did plunge their horrid little proboscises into those breams' carcasses, until they had bored a hole nearly through them. Well, did you sit under that ash tree? No, but the others did, and they said the shade was as "grateful and comforting" as—no, Mr. Epps, Mr. Hopper cannot afford to give you an advertisement for nothing—well, as ash trees usually afford. Any big bream under that ash tree? No, not that day, but there were some jolly big French poodles—two black ones and one white 'un—the rummiest beggars to look at you ever saw; they grow their wool in front, and it stops short all at once—kind of half way—and poor doggie is next to naked in his hinder parts. But

that white one! He is a cute one. When our backs were turned he soon smelt out Fletcher's—[another advertisement gratis!]
—prime half-crown pork pie and demolished the interior, leaving the crust for us. Poor doggie, he *would* be bilious on Sunday. No, not any big carp bream. Mr. Hopper thinks that wagon load slightly diminished the numbers. Lots of silver bream, a few roach, and two eels were brought to bank, but nothing of any size to warrant special notice. Friend Humber hooked an eel close on 3lbs., but it got entangled in the ivy on the wall already alluded to, and broke the trace. If Mr. Hopper were to proceed to describe the beauties of the place, it would at once be recognised. Suffice it to say that a most enjoyable day was spent, and although the fish, with the exception of the seven pounder, were not large, still a goodly number—best part of 100—were caught.

NO. VIII.—MR. ARTHUR MOUNTAIN'S BIG CARP—A DAY'S
TENCH FISHING—AND AN UGLY SPILL.

MR. Arthur Mountain has very kindly placed in the Park lake the carp which he caught at Croxby Pond about three weeks ago. Mr. Hopper understands that it was a very fine specimen of the *Cyprinus carpio*. It is to be hoped that its captor will, before the season closes, be successful in finding a suitable mate for it. The fecundity of the carp is prodigious, as upwards of 700,000 eggs are stated to have been found in the ovaries of a single carp of moderate size. Carp are very fond of lettuces, so any one with spare time on his hands, and a superfluity of that vegetable in his garden, cannot do better than go and stand on the plank on the north side of the Park water and feed Mr. Carp therefrom. He is warranted by his captor not to bite, and to be exceedingly playful; at least Mr. Mountain found him so when he captured him, and it is only natural to suppose that his playfulness is habitual with him. He is rather young at present—not above 40 or 50 years old at the outside—and, unless he catches cold or rheumatics, he is safe to be found in the Park lake 150 or 200 years hence. Mr. Hopper is not joking, for it is a fact that carp attain more than a patriarchal age. In addition to lettuce, let Mr. Hopper suggest to any one who intends feeding Mr. Carp from the aforesaid plank to take with him (when in season) some fresh green peas and very small potatoes. Although to a great extent vegetarian in his diet, Mr. Carp does not object, by way of a change, to a nice red worm or a grub of some sort. He is also very partial to paste, and, although our teetotal friends will scout the idea, Mr. *Cyprinus carpio* actually likes a little brandy or gin worked into the paste. If too much of either fluid is added our friend gets very tight and gives way to all kinds of gambols, and thinks nothing of throwing himself clean out of the water and coming down into it again

like a thousand of bricks. So much for Mr. Mountain's big carp. The species was alluded to in the 15th century as a "dayntous fysshe, but scarce."

Mr. Hopper must now hark back a year with his Notes. Shortly after Midsummer-day last year he observed an advertisement in the columns of a local paper, which had a very taking appearance. The gist of it was that anglers could have a good day's fishing, at the distance of one mile only from North Thoresby, at a moderate charge. On inquiry the latter turned out to be a matter of 2s. per rod, but if the fishing really should be good no real angler would object to the price. It was quite clear that little boys would be conspicuous by their absence from the pond side, for was not the advertisement headed "To Lovers of the Rod," and might not any small urchin with sensitive feelings and a somewhat suspicious mind surmise that Mr. Butt made an ironical allusion to another kind of rod! However, this new fishing resort must be duly communicated to Twynkles, which without delay was done. That old war-horse immediately took a pinch of snuff, snorted loudly, and declared war to the kni—beg pardon, hook—against the finny tribe on the following Saturday. Mr. Hopper also snorted, and vowed he would put on his angling war paint in connection with the projected expedition. Before Saturday Twynkles had bought up all the rice in Grimsby town, and on that eventful morning appeared at the Town station with a goodly supply of the condiment boiled down to a nicety. Needless to relate, Mr. Hopper was also on the platform, and by half-past six he and Twynkles found themselves by the pond side, and selected the most likely corner for commencing operations. Having well ground-baited with some of the aforesaid rice, the rods were soon put together and the lines in the water, and for two hours or so nothing but roach, with an occasional eel and perch, were brought to bank. Old Mr. Oaktree, who lives in the farm cottage, and is Mr. Butt's caretaker and representative at the pond, presently put in an appearance, and demanded our angling tickets, which were duly handed over. Twynkles suggested that probably a little more rice might have the effect

of bringing round our baits another kind of fish, and, Mr. Hopper acquiescing in this suggestion, a few more handsfull were thrown in. Mr. Oaktree ventured to remark that "the rice would be strange poor eating without some treacle sauce with it." Mr. Hopper replied he would give them plenty of treacle sauce presently, which Mr. Oaktree evidently regarded as a fairish joke, as he stayed on to see the result. He had not long to wait, as Twynkles soon had something at the end of his line very different from what the morning had so far yielded. After two or three minutes play it was safely brought to bank, and Mr. Oaktree was duly informed it was one of the "yellow 'uns" of which it was believed by Twynkles and Mr. Hopper there was a fairly numerous colony in the pond. It was now Mr. Hopper's turn, and he soon had hold of another of the yellow 'uns, and by the combined efforts of Twynkles (he objects to "Mr." before his name) and Mr. Hopper (the latter prefers the prefix as being more dignified) seven or eight of the same species were soon lying side by side on the bank. Mr. Oaktree declared he had never seen "owght loike it, and that we were giving 'on 'em' treacle sauce now." The old gentleman then toddled off to breakfast or some of his duties on the farm, returning at intervals during the day to see if any more of the "yellow un's" had been foolish enough to partake of rice pudding and treacle sauce. There were generally, whenever he cared to put in an appearance, another specimen or two added to the heap on the bank, and when Twynkles and Mr. Hopper put up their rods at the end of the day's proceedings, they found they had rather over 60lbs weight of fish to carry to the station besides their angling impedimenta. It is needless to say that Mr. Oaktree's "yellow un's" were tench, and on counting them they mounted up to 35 in number, of which Mr. Hopper had grassed 19 and Twynkles 16. As the lake in the People's Park at Grimsby had no tench in it, Mr. Hopper contrived, with the aid of wet grass, to get home alive a few of those he had caught and turned them into the lake, where a week afterwards he also turned in 10 more of the same species to prevent the others from

feeling too solitary. Towards the end of the following week, Twynkles confidentially remarked to Mr. Hopper that he was strongly of opinion Mr. Butt's pond would be much benefitted by another visit from our two worthy selves, and Mr. Hopper feeling no disinclination to fall in with those views, expressed himself in readiness to be on the war path against the finny tribe *at the same time* on Saturday morning, feeling very strongly that "the early bird catches the worm." Accordingly, on Saturday morning by half-past six, the pond side again found Twynkles and Mr. Hopper there, bent on business. Mr. Oaktree was also up betimes to see some of the rice pudding and treacle sauce business, and he was again afforded an ample opportunity of seeing "how it was done," for at the close of the day's programme 26 of the "yellow 'uns" had left their watery home at Thoresby. Twynkles had his revenge on Mr. Hopper, as the latter's heap only amounted to 11, whilst Twynkles was responsible for 15. Twynkles literally fed the neighbourhood of the Bull-ring on tench for two or three days, whilst, as before stated, Mr. Hopper placed 10 of his catch in the Park lake.

It will probably be asked whether Mr. Hopper, in the course of his angling experiences has come off entirely scot free in the matter of accidents? Well, not quite. Two years ago Mr. Hopper had a nasty spill which might have seriously affected his spinal cord. How did that happen, Mr. Hopper? As nearly as Mr. Hopper's memory will serve him, it would be about the beginning of October when he, along with Master Hopper, Uncle Peter (this is a new character, a wily old brother-in-law of Mr. Hopper's), and Twynkles, decided on an outing to Austen Fen Bridge, on the Louth and Tetney Navigation. To North Thoresby by rail, and then in Mr. Eyesax's trap to Austen Fen. A good day's fishing resulted, the best part of 300 being landed; but it was little thought that Mr. Eyesax would land his passengers where he did on the return journey to Thoresby station. The start from Austen Fen was made about twenty minutes to seven, and in about twenty minutes a heavy black cloud completely fastened its

dark pall over the country, and a tremendous downpour of rain, accompanied with wind, came on. Not a yard could be seen in front, where sat Mr. Eyesax on the off-side driving (?), Twynkles on the near side, and Master Hopper in the middle between those two worthies. On the back seat of the dog-cart clung Mr. Hopper and Uncle Peter—the latter an old gentleman moving on towards 60, but still affecting juvenile manners and gaiety. The rain! it rained in torrents, fit to wash Mr. Eyesax's human cargo right off his trap. Now for adventure No. 1. Approaching Fulstow village it was suddenly found that our careful Jehu had landed his horse's head well nigh through the rear part of a carrier's cart, much to the astonishment and apparent fright of its occupants. However, Mr. Eyesax just contrived to avoid running amuck right through the tent covered vehicle, and we breathed once more. A word of caution was now deemed necessary, and Mr. Eyesax was directed not to drive *quite* so fast—he had been shoving us along at just upon 14 to the hour—and to keep well to the left side of the road. Twynkles was particularly emphatic on that point, but old Eyesax would have it that it was "all right." Through a couple of villages without mishap, and then—crash! bang!! followed by the screeching of a woman's voice, with goodness only knows how many kids howling. As good luck would have it, Mr. Eyesax had only run his off wheel inside the wheel or on to the step of the other vehicle which, it should be remarked, had approached from the opposite direction. After a bit of backing our Jehu got clear, and, having ascertained that the small fry in the other trap were only scared, we again went on our way. Alas! this time to destruction! Master Hopper, who is quite an expert in the matter of consulting his own safety, asked Mr. Eyesax if in the course of his career as a driver he had ever *really* run into any one. That wily old Jehu replied, "Niver in the whole course of his existence." Mr. Hopper and friends were just beginning to think that after all the other people we had collided with might possibly be in the wrong, when—crash! bang! again. Twynkles was sent flying out in

front into the middle of the road, Master Hopper was shot into untold space, Mr. Eyesax performed a similar somersault on the off side of the trap. Four occupants of the other colliding vehicle were also shot out the way they were going. Our near shaft and traces were broken; our horse went for yards, eventually landing in the deep ditch on the right about twelve yards ahead. The other horse was also shot clean out of his traces. But where were Mr. Hopper and Uncle Peter? Aye; where were they? For two seconds after the collision there appeared to be perfect silence, and then the most unearthly crackling, smashing-up noise that ever assailed Mr. Hopper's ears ensued, and Mr. Hopper found himself flying into space—too dark to see, but not to feel. Tableau: Mr. Hopper lying his 6ft. length at the bottom of a narrow ditch, quite five or six feet deep and 13 or 14 feet from the road side, both traps overhanging him—Mr. Eyesax's trap having pulled the other one (wheels interlocked) backwards over the green sward (this accounted for the aforesaid two seconds of silence) intervening between the road and ditch. A few feet (about three) ahead of him, also at the bottom of the ditch, lay Uncle Peter also full length and firmly wedged in (his corporation being considerably more rotund and balloon-like than Mr. Hopper's). Master Hopper, five yards further, also at the bottom of said ditch; and ahead of him the horse, also in the ditch. And Mr. Eyesax, where was he? Why, rushing about on the bank and calling out for his hat. "Where is my hat?" he cried, as if nothing more had occurred than a gust of wind to lay bare his dishevelled locks. But how fared it with Twynkles? He had narrowly escaped decapitation, for as the trap swerved off the road from the force of the collision he just managed to jerk his noble headpiece aside and so avoid his windpipe being stove in. But to return to Mr. Hopper. He found on the top of him, when lying at the bottom of the ditch, two wooden seats from the dog-cart, the cushions thereof, nine fishing rods, four fishing baskets, four landing nets, one large bag of worms, two small ditto, sundry grub tins, 267 dead roach, perch, and eels, several dead

pike, two or three live bait cans, 19 live roach jumping about his cranium, sundry light mackintoshes and trap rugs and last, but not least, the water from the aforesaid bait cans percolating through sundry button holes to Mr. Hopper's august skin, and—minus his hat. "Where am I?" said Uncle Peter. "Why, in the ditch," said Mr. Hopper. "Any bones broken, Uncle?" Uncle didn't know until we had got him out of the ditch, and then, marvellous to relate, not one of the nine ejected ones had a scratch to show. But poor old Uncle, he was so nervous. "What would his Annie say, when she knew he had been so nearly losing his life?" But all's well that ends well, and, help being at hand, steps were taken to dig the horse out of the ditch, and Mr. Hopper and friends collected their belongings and proceeded on foot to the station where, through it being very late, they caught the train for Grimsby and arrived in due course, presenting about as disreputable an appearance as can well be imagined. Mr. Hopper recovered his hat, but Uncle Peter landed home to the arms of his Annie with his noble pate surmounted and tied in with his white pocket handkerchief. Well, Mr. Hopper, that was a narrow squeak for you, and no doubt you've steered clear of Mr. Eyesax and his fast going steed on a dark night ever since that eventful October evening. Mr. Hopper's career in life has been marked by several untoward events. He has lost his right leg eleven times, his right eye once, his nose altogether, the left side of his face from an explosion, his top lip once only, his left arm nearly, and a portion of his right hand—this is all true, so readers of these notes will conclude that if French poodles are such rummy looking beggars, why sure and behold Mr. Hopper must be a rummier! But Mr. Hopper's most vulnerable and assailable point is situate on the left side of his frame. However, the less said about that the better, or Mrs. Hopper will appear upon the scene, demand explanations, make her presence felt, and put the extinguisher upon Mr. Hopper and his angling notes.

1890.

IX.—GUDGEON—AND A NARROW SQUEAK.

AT the time of penning these Notes Mr. Hopper is in a very submissive and penitent mood by reason of having caused so much inconvenience and annoyance by recounting in his last week's Notes a list of the accidents and misfortunes which during his career have befallen him; but who would have thought that his allusion to them in his angling Notes would have evoked such widespread condolence and practical sympathy as since Wednesday have been manifested towards him! Mr. Hopper, without intending to cast any reflection upon the intelligence of the readers of his Notes, certainly thought they would have read between the lines, and would not have taken literally the language in which he wished to place on record the happening of his somewhat numerous accidents. Of course Mr. Hopper did not wish his readers to conclude that he had *actually* lost the various limbs and organs which he gave a list of, but he merely intended to convey that he had lost the temporary use thereof. For instance, it is needless to remark that Mr. Hopper has not and never has had eleven right legs to lose. He, through accidents, simply lost *the use* of his right leg eleven times, and so in like manner with regard to his organs of sight, sense of smell, &c. And now, after this long preface, a word or two of apology about the inconvenience and annoyance caused, Mr. Editor, to your worthy self. Mr. Hopper is deeply grieved to hear from you that ever since Thursday last your business premises have been invaded almost from morn till night with parcel post packages and railway vans leaving ominous looking crates and boxes containing almost everything that human ingenuity could devise or practical sympathy suggest to alleviate and render less terrible to bear the ailments and afflictions to which Mr. Hopper was supposed to be a victim and martyr. It is impossible for Mr. Hopper to acknowledge everything which

has been sent to him, but he cannot forbear mentioning a few of them. For instance, a consignment of ten crutches from Greenwich Hospital for Disabled Seamen; five complete cork legs (two right and three left); two ditto to be adjusted below the knee; at least 150 walking sticks; a gross of elastic knee-caps; one complete indiarubber leg with joints (automatic action guaranteed); upwards of two score wooden legs of various lengths; two glass eyes from the widow of a deceased gudgeon fisher; one ditto from a firm of celebrated opticians on the Holborn Viaduct; sundry pairs of spectacles and eye-glasses; artificial noses without end, warranted to permit of respiration; Roman noses, Grecian noses, Wellington noses, turned-up noses, pug noses, aquiline noses. Some of the latter may be useful, but it is quite clear that Mr. Hopper, even if he had lost his nose, could not wear a pug nose one day and assume an aquiline one the next. Then, again, a hook in place of his hand; and last, not least, a steam arm! Talk about Miss Killmanseg and her golden leg! Why she was not in it with Mr. Hopper, who feels that he has now made a sufficient acknowledgment of the various artificial limbs and organs sent to supply his supposed wants and shortcomings. Mr. Hopper now takes leave of these well-intentioned gifts, and promises not to be betrayed into alluding to his accidents in any future Notes he may write, and now returns to his piscatorial experiences

Gudgeon! Well, rather! Mrs. Hopper is dead nuts on them, and declares that smelts are not in it with them from an eating point of view. So, to please his matrimonial half, Mr. Hopper went gudgeon fishing one day this season, and landed a nice dish of 115 of these dainty little morsels, besides sundry roach. Now where did Mr. Hopper go? It was not on the Louth and Tetney Navigation, so anglers must set their headpieces to work and guess the *locus in quo*. Mr. Hopper generally fishes from the mere love of the sport, but he must acknowledge he fishes for the pot when out for the gudgeon. Ladies are very expert gudgeon fishers, particularly on the Thames. The fair sex have a much more delicate

touch than the sterner sex, and in that probably lies the secret of their success. At this time of the year gudgeon fishing is quite the rage on the Thames, and many a punt may be seen with its fair occupants intent upon the tiny float. The water on the Louth Canal between Alvingham Lock and the lock before that village simply swarms with gudgeon, but Mr. Hopper cannot remember ever having caught any great number below Alvingham Lock. So much for gudgeon fishing and where to find them.

A somewhat uncommon incident occurred a little time ago when Mr. Hopper was angling with two hooks. Having a bite, he struck and landed two fish, an eel on the lower hook and a white bream on the upper one. Two fish at a time are not very unusual, but two of such entirely different species must be so. Mr. Hopper also wonders whether it has happened to any two Grimsby anglers to play and eventually land the same fish. This was done a few days ago. Two friends were pike fishing—live baiting—within a few feet of each other; almost simultaneously, within three or 4 seconds, they each had *a run* (not on the bank side, but from Mr. Pike) and on striking they each found that they had hooked the same fish. The pike seeing two dinners laid in the shape of two glistening roach had forthwith appropriated both, one after the other. Whom did the fish belong to? There was no wily Solomon present to decide the question, and no feelings of humanity which could be stirred such as were present in the case of the live and the dead child when that sagacious monarch was called upon to decide to which woman the living child belonged. Mr. Hopper has no doubt that although anglers are as a rule a peaceable lot of men, these two anglers would have a battle royal over the ownership of the pike, and perhaps—Mr. Hopper doesn't know though—they might both fall into the river for their pains. Better to have cut the fish in halves, as Solomon's naughty woman wanted his Majesty to do with the living child. This year when fishing on the Trent with two hooks baited with worm Mr. Hopper caught one flounder on both hooks—he (not Mr. Hopper but Mr. Flounder) had voraciously taken hook No. 1 and then No. 2, so two hooks had to be extracted.

It is curious not to say wonderful what extraordinary names are given to certain places on the Trent which are known to anglers as "good swims." Here are a few:—Putty Nob, Scotchman's Hole, Shuttle Swim, Cranus's Pits, Girton Stakes, Bream Swim, Turnpost Swim, The Rovings, The Ropes, The Staithe Swim, Dunham Dubbs, and any amount of others. Mr. Hopper once went to "Putty Nob." It took him $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours to tow the boat there, and when he arrived the wind was so strong that the boat dragged the big stone let down to moor the boat in position and gradually drifted down stream. There was no help for it but to go home again. No more "Putty Nob" for Mr. Hopper on a windy day.

The steamers on the Trent, with sometimes four or five barges in tow, are a great nuisance to anglers, as when one is coming it means up with your mooring stone at once and away to the bank side. Mr. Hopper and Twynkles were fishing Dunham Dubbs last year when the steamer "Robin Hood" with five barges in tow suddenly popped round the corner. No time to pull up the stone, as we were fishing in water just upon 30 feet deep. Mr. Hopper had just time to sheer the boat ashore when "Robin Hood" was abreast, the nose of the row boat touched the shore, and the mooring line being quite taut she flew into mid-stream. It was now almost a certainty of being run into and smashed by one or other of the barges and left to get ashore as best could be. "Get your oar, Twynkles," said Mr. Hopper, who seized his and commenced to pull for his life, but he was horrified to find no way being made. There was Twynkles pulling like a modern Hercules and blowing like a grampus; but, would you believe it, he had sat down in the excitement and flurry of the moment *facing* Mr. Hopper, and consequently also facing the stem of the boat. Whatever work Mr. Hopper had therefore been putting in Twynkles had simply neutralised! As luck would have it there were a decent lot of men on the barges, and the tillers were put "hard over," with the result that the last barge just missed running us down by two or three feet. Twynkles is not a bad man, but he was scarcely ready for thirty feet of water that October day. Oh! Twynkles—thou didn't look pale, and a mighty big sigh of relief escaped thee when the danger was past!

1890.

X.—PIKE RECORDS.—FRIEND BROWN'S PIKE, AND MISS HOPPER, AND RACHEL, THE MILCH COW.

WHAT is the biggest pike you ever heard of, Mr. Hopper? 170 lbs., Mr. Enquirer.—Wherever was such a monster caught, Mr. Hopper? Well, Mr. Hopper once had a father—But surely your father did not catch it? No, but who said he did? You will interrupt so, and not allow Mr. Hopper to answer your question. Well, Mr. Hopper, senr., that is, the real Mr. Hopper's paternal ancestor, had a book, a very, very old edition of Izaak Walton's book on angling, which every school-boy is aware is known as "The Complete Angler." No doubt it was complete in those far off days, although it did not discourse of the styles in vogue now commonly known as the Nottingham and Thames styles of angling. Now our old friend Izaak was born towards the end of the 16th century, and the original edition of this work, also known as "Contemplative Man's Recreation," was published somewhere about the middle of the 17th century. It has been said by an excellent authority that the book will continue to be read "for its charming simplicity of manner, its pastoral freshness and poetry, and the pure, peaceful, and pious spirit which is breathed from its quaint old pages." Old Izaak was also responsible for the publication of the Lives of the celebrated Dr. John Donne, Hooker, Sir John Wotton, George Herbert, and Bishop Sanderson. The poet Wordsworth dedicated to them a beautiful sonnet, in which he speaks of them as—

Satellites burning in a lurid ring

Around meek Walton's heavenly memory.

But, Mr. Hopper, what has this got to do with the 170 lbs. pike? Well, perhaps it has not, except indirectly; but it is only human nature to wander off a bit into rhapsody when such a glorious old gentleman as the immortal Izaak is brought to the front. However, Mr. Hopper feels that there is some anxiety abroad to hear more

of Mr. *Esox Lucius*. Well, how far had Mr. Hopper got before he wandered away? Oh, yes, his father had a book—a very old edition of “The Complete Angler.” This book recorded the capture of a pike of 170lbs. weight in a pool which had been a disused chalk-pit. The parish clerk was trolling, and caught his foot on some encumbrance on the edge of the pool, and, like Mr. Hopper has done on at least two occasions, tumbled off *terra firma* into the water. The huge monster of the pool made for the unfortunate parish clerk, and the old gentleman only managed to save his bacon by scrambling out at the side just as the voracious fish was going to make, or at any rate endeavour to make, a meal of him. Whether the old angler would have made a palatable morsel is not recorded, but Mr. Hopper does not doubt that, if captured, the clerk would have been carried off to the pike’s lurking place and there leisurely swallowed and digested. Having recovered from his fright our trolling friend told of his narrow escape to his fellow villagers, who it is needless to say were somewhat sceptical about the truth of the plain unvarnished tale related to them by their angling neighbour. However, it was decided to test the accuracy of his statement by running off the water from the pool. This was done, and at the bottom lay in a half submerged state the clerk’s 170lb. enemy. Cart ropes were obtained and fastened round his ponderous frame, and he was dragged from his haunt, knocked on the head, and found to pull down the scale at the aforesaid enormous weight. Of course Mr. Hopper cannot vouch for the accuracy of the narrative, but would good old Izaak have introduced it into the pages of his famous book unless there was foundation for what he recorded? Every angler knows that the excessive voracity of the pike is proverbial. It will readily attack a fish of its own size, and in addition to fish will prey upon frogs, water rats, and even ducklings.

There is a picture in an issue of *The Fishing Gazette* of a female pike, weighing 29lbs., which was found some little time back in the lake at Ewhurst Park, Basingstoke, the seat of Lord Alexander Russell. It had apparently met its death in the vain

attempt to swallow one of its own species, weighing glbs.! The two fish, in the position in which they were found, have been stuffed at Winchester. It is stated in the paper just referred to that pike have died in this manner before, and that it is doubtful whether or not these should be regarded as instances of voracity or pure accidents. Pike, like other fish, frequently do battle, and it has been suggested that when two savage fish rush headlong at one another the smaller one might easily enter the jaws of the other. Once in, there would be no getting out again, for the pike's mouth is lined with hundreds of sharp teeth, which, like those of the shark, point throatwards.

The Fishing Gazette, which probably but very few have an opportunity of seeing, has under the picture of the fish the following lines:—

(With apologies to William Shakespeare.)
 BIG PIKE :—" Oh, that this too, too solid fish would melt,
 Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew . . . adieu."
 [Expires.]

LITTLE PIKE :—" O, bosom, black as death!
 O, limned soul, that, struggling to be free,
 Art more engaged! Help, angels! make
 assay!" *Hamlet.*

Mr. Hopper not only tenders his apologies to the immortal bard, but also to the editor of *The Fishing Gazette*, for reproducing the above incident and lines from its columns.

Mr. Hopper does not pretend to be much of a pike fisher himself, but several of his friends are adepts in that line; and although comparisons are odious, he thinks the best of them, anyhow as a troller, is his friend Bobbingmoon. Now this wily old angler will spin his bait in such a taking manner as to make it irresistible in the eyes of Mr. Pike, even although the latter has already partly breakfasted or dined. Mr. Hopper remembers one famous fellow which Bobbingmoon landed. The pike rushed out from his haunt with lightning speed at the glittering lure, and missing it doubled back at once, almost bending head to tail in doing so, and this time seized what proved to be his last taste in this world, for Bobbingmoon drove the triangle of hooks into his hungry jaws with such relentless grip that escape was well nigh impossible. A pretty fish, and a pretty kill this—one that will live long in Mr. Hopper's memory.

Friend Humber is also very successful in bringing big pike to bank. Last February, within the short space of seven days, he killed two pike not far from Grimsby, weighing respectively $16\frac{1}{4}$ and $16\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. both splendid specimens of *esox lucius*. Did Friend Humber have them set up? No, not exactly; he has a soul above setting up and putting in a glass case such *fry* as those 16 pounders. Not until he has circumvented a 20 pounder will our friend of the 'cello have one set up and glass cased! And then—well what then? Why, then, he will give a solo concert at—well, at Grimsby Town Hall, for the benefit of the Hospital, and will also have his 20 pounder on view, together with the identical rod, line, and hook (and it is a hook too—his own invention!) with which he makes the capture. Good-bye, friend Humber; you are very sanguine about that 20 pounder, and in the interests of the Hospital Mr. Hopper hopes you will have one on view this coming winter.

Friend Brown is also a good pike angler, but then he does not hail from Grimsby; he is a Trent-sider. He was telling Mr. Hopper this year that some years ago when fishing with a worm on the Trent he hooked a pike at least 30lbs., and played it for goodness knows how long; brought it alongside to be gaffed any number of times, and after all it broke away from him. Mr. Hopper does not in the least doubt that it was a very large pike, but he took the opportunity of reminding friend Brown that it had grown 5lbs. in weight since he told the same tale to him last year, when it was only 25lbs. Brown was furious, and declared the pike had never been under 30lbs. since he had told the tale of its near capture, but Mr. Hopper's memory is not treacherous or faulty, and—by the nine gods, he swears—that that pike was only 25lbs. when Brown last year told Mr. Hopper about it. If Brown still persists—why coffee at 4 a.m., and pistols for 2. Brown is a good deal wider than Mr. Hopper; *ergo*, a better mark. If perchance Mr. Hopper's angling notes should suddenly cease to appear—well, his fellow anglers will know that the ruthless Brown is the responsible party.

The biggest pike Mr. Hopper ever put eyes on weighed 65lbs., but it was in a glass case at the Fisheries Exhibition. Of course Mr. Hopper has had hold of many pike very much bigger than that, but unfortunately through flaws in his tackle they have broken away. Nonsense, Mr. Hopper, don't write such rubbish, or the readers of your angling notes will lose faith in you.

Well, now for a real true story; Mr. Hopper saw it in the paper, and therefore it must be true. A gamekeeper in Germany saw floating on the surface of a lake a substance which on being drawn to the side he discovered to be a dead carp of great size. Fastened in its back were the talons of a huge eagle, the skeleton frame of which was quite perfect with its whitened bones. It is surmised that the carp, as is the habit of that species of fish, was swimming on the surface in shallow water, when the eagle swooped down upon it and fastened its sharp talons in the back of the carp, which affrighted at this sudden onslaught made off for deep water and dragged its assailant down and drowned it. Unable to free itself from the firm grip of the eagle's claws, the carp carried its dead foe on its back until the flesh and feathers rotted away, and even then continued to bear about with it in its watery wanderings the skeleton of its ruthless aggressor. Mr. Hopper thinks this must be true, because gamekeepers never tell lies; the most inveterate poacher is always ready to admit this. So much for the eagle and carp.

Little Miss Hopper has lately been complaining and saying that Bobbingmoon, Witchdorter, Uncle Peter, Humber, Twynkles, Mr. Eyesax, and friend Brown are constantly given a place in Mr. Hopper's notes, but that she—a real angler by the way—scarcely ever appears. Well, as the pilfering of the worms has been atoned for, and consequently overlooked, Mr. Hopper will relate one little anecdote more about her. Fond of pets? Of course she is! Fond of cows? Well rather! Afraid of them? Not likely! Why, there's that dear old Rachel will let me (so says little Miss Hopper) do anything with her. Now, Rachel is the milch cow at our Trent-side holiday retreat.

Mr. Hopper is just coming round the corner of the farm buildings on his way to the Trent, not many minutes after the above conversation. Tableau—Little Miss Hopper flying for her very life, in strides of at least seven feet, from the aforesaid Rachel, who with tail well up in the air and head down is careering madly in pursuit, a few feet in the rear of little Miss H. The friendly fence is reached just in time and scrambled over in breathless haste. Mr. Hopper intimates to his brave little daughter that he thought she was not afraid of dear old Rachel. Well, no more she was, but Rachel was rather frisky that morning; moreover she could play with Rachel quite as well from the other side of the fence. Oh! little Miss Hopper!

MAY, 1891.

XI.—ADMIRAL SATANBOY AND THE "LONDON FLEA."

ADMIRAL Satanboy was the skipper of H.M. billyboy sloop which brought Sir Wilful Orson's present of pancakes and ginger-beer to be consumed by the honorary freemen of the borough of Grimsby and other deserving Grimbarians, on the occasion of the public rejoicings in connection with the borough becoming a full blown county borough. The pancakes were cold and the ginger-beer was hot, by reason of the ginger wherewith it was gingered; therefore also the aforesaid honorary freemen and other deserving Grimbarians who were privileged to partake thereof were also *fully blown*, and so became duly qualified county borough citizens.

The foregoing must be regarded as a preface to Mr. Hopper's 11th number of his angling notes. Now it must be quite clear that the skipper in charge of such a precious cargo as the above must be an important personage, but if he also turned out to be an angler so much the more important was he in Mr. Hopper's eyes. Now the Admiral was as devout a worshipper and regular an attendant at church on Sunday as he was an ardent and keen angler on such days of the week as he could get away from the aforesaid pancakes and ginger-beer. Mr. Hopper therefore hied him to church on the Sunday morning following the public rejoicings, and having listened with due attention to the excellent pulpit discourse of the Rev. Mr. Closeoflanding, he tackled on to the Admiral outside the sacred edifice and at once mooted the desirability of a fishing excursion on the following Tuesday to a lovely little trout stream, over which Mr. Hopper has temporarily the proprietary rights of pulling out the speckled beauties which sport therein. Need it be said that a compact was concluded for the day named to travel by the 9-35 a.m. train to the charming little town of Louth, contingent on the Admiral obtaining a day's leave of absence from his cabin boy and deck washer, which

was duly conceded. The wind—east it was—it blew that cutting that Tuesday morning fit to freeze the marrow of one's bones and to tint with the loveliest blue the nasal organs of such as braved its Arctic grip—more a day for catching the influenza epidemic than the beautiful speckled trout. However, sharp to time both the Admiral and Mr. Hopper turned up on the platform fully equipped for a day's angling. Now the ordinary return fare to Louth is 2s. 4d., but if the angler pops his fishing rod through the little ticket window and gently tickles the ribs of the ticket clerk, he will politely hand him an angling ticket and only charge 1s. 6d., thereby saving the angler's pocket to the tune of 10d. Now the Admiral was not up to this saving of 10d., but prompted by Mr. Hopper he tickled in due form the ribs of the clerk, and so saved his rod. "Just to think, Mr. Hopper," said the Admiral, "What this means! The saving of that rod. amounts to two fourpenny whiskies and a twopenny wash and brush up, instead of helping to fill the coffers of the railway company." Mr. Hopper did just think, and although not a whisky partaker he quite acquiesced in the Admiral's sentiment.

The railway journey was soon over, and in a very few minutes the stream side was reached. "The water is a lovely colour," said Mr. Hopper's companion, "and a nice lot of it coming down stream. What a lovely little spot, too—quite a miniature 'Dovedale.'" The rods were soon put together and the flies selected, and the Admiral almost at his first throw landed a pretty well-conditioned little fish, which was duly deposited as No. 1 of the day's sport in his fishing creel. And then both flogged the water without the sign of another fish. Very presently the water came down in considerably greater volume and with a good deal of colour in it, which gave rise to the surmise on the part of both that there must have been heavy rain in the night higher up the stream. Later in the day it was found that this supposition was altogether erroneous. Fly-fishing was now useless, owing to the thickness of the water, so the Admiral quietly said he had come prepared for all conditions of water, and had brought a small tin of "London fleas."

The Admiral enquired if there was any objection to the use of a "London flea"—did Mr. Hopper, as the temporary proprietor of the fishing, object to such a lure? No; Mr. Hopper did not object to the use of a "London flea," which the Admiral in due course mounted, whilst Mr. Hopper bethought him he would try the artificial minnow known as the "Derby killer." Our seafaring friend was right. The "London flea" proved irresistible, whilst spin the minnow as he would Mr. Hopper could not induce a trout to make a rush for what he thought a tempting lure; once and once only did a wary trout emerge from his hiding place under a bridge and give the metal minnow an angry push with his nose turned up with disgust at finding what a base imposition it was, and then turn tail to seek once more his retreat under the bridge. The Admiral's hooks were small, which caused him to miss a lot of fish, but at last he hooked a nicely fed trout, which must have weighed just upon a pound. That fish was a caution—come near the landing net it would not. The Admiral chuckled and laughed to such an extent that the vibration was carried down the rod and line to the trout, which so evidently enjoyed (notwithstanding the hook in its mouth) the Admiral's merriment that it positively came several times to the top of the water and deliberately smiled at its would-be captor. "Give him time—give him time, Mr. Hopper," said the Admiral, "and let him enjoy himself a little longer." Mr. Hopper did give time—any amount of it—in fact rather too much, for that jolly trout at last rolled over leisurely on his side, winked with his left eye at the Admiral, flopped the water with his tail, and then—why then he parted company with the Admiral. Need it be said that the latter immediately stopped laughing. The Admiral needed consolation, so Mr. Hopper appropriately pointed out that that facetious fish would be there in that same pool when the Admiral next came to angle for it. Our salt water friend adjusted another "London flea" on his tackle, whilst Mr. Hopper persevered with his "Derby killer" (which proved anything but a killer that day), until the mystery of the coloured water was solved. Flowing

down a small brook which emptied itself into the main stream (which above its junction with the small brook was as clear as crystal) came dirty greasy-looking water direct from a large sheep wash, which Mr. Hopper had forgotten the existence of. Nothing turns trout so sick as water of this kind, and they will not look at any bait unless it is a nice "London flea" dropped right under their noses. Having fathomed the cause of the discoloured water, Mr. Hopper forthwith discarded his minnow and tempted fortune with a nice looking "flea," and soon landed a nice trout. It was near the end of the day—at least that part of the day which is suitable for fishing—so having broken the ice with one trout, and so saved his angling reputation, Mr. Hopper took to pieces his rod, in which example he was shortly followed by the Admiral, and made tracks for the town where they had previously arranged to refresh the inner man. The Admiral had in his creel $4\frac{1}{2}$ brace of trout in fair condition, considering the severe winter and the backwardness of the spring season.

Now, fellow anglers, what is a "London flea"? Mr. Hopper is so far willing to confide in you as being trustworthy recipients of angling secrets as to say that it—namely, the aforesaid insect—has neither legs nor wings; it has a tail and a head and eyes, but it cannot jump; it is never found in blankets or any kind of flannel, nor yet in dogs or cats and it does not fatten on the blood of innocent babes or more mature but withal tender skinned beings of the human race; it is not a "Norfolk Howard," nor in any way allied thereto. Well, what is it? Don't tell anybody—it is a "London flea." Even Scotchmen call it by that name.

Need it be added that the Admiral was delighted with his day's outing, and so was Mr. Hopper, except that he was nearly three days in bed with racking pains in the back and head. However, "all's well that ends well," and he is looking forward to another day's trout fishing with the Admiral very shortly. Before we part from our worthy friend the Admiral, it is only right on Mr. Hopper's part to give his angling readers a fishing story of the Admiral's—a real true one—and

(very nearly, but not quite) guaranteed as such by him, because it was told to him by a friend. Well, here goes :—A gentleman was fishing in a river in Ireland, and hooked a large salmon, which escaped with the gaff sticking in him. The next spring the same fish was caught again with the gaff still sticking in him, but it had sprouted into a little bush! The Admiral's friend to whom the aforesaid gentleman had related this anecdote did not quite believe it, and thought the gentleman was trying to get a rise out of him. The Admiral's friend therefore thought he would try to cap the gentleman's story, so he said, "Well, I am not at all surprised at that, for a very similar thing happened to me about three years ago. I was fishing under London Bridge, and landed a salmon of about 17lbs., getting him right into the boat, but in the hurry I forgot to kill him, as I saw another salmon rising about 20 yards off. I threw to the second one, when suddenly No. 1 jumped overboard, and I lost him. Well, it appears the boat I was fishing from had been used for carrying grain, and very strangely a salmon was caught in the autumn in the very same spot, and he had a small crop of wheat growing all over his back. The fish was taken ashore and duly reaped, and there was just enough to make a very little cake. If ever you go to London go to the Crystal Palace, and you will there see the cake under a glass case, where it is kept as a curiosity." Mr. Hopper thinks that of all fish stories he ever heard the above takes the "cake," and he therefore takes leave of his angling readers for a short period, to enable them to digest the above story.

AUGUST, 1892.

XII.—HELTERTON AND THE "BARGEE."

HELTERTON always was a fine boy, and there can be no manner of doubt about it, is so still—his parents said he was a fine boy when he was first ushered into this wicked but jolly world—the family pillroller and physicker concurred in this pœan of his wondrously sized limbs and the clocklike regularity and bellowslike force and vigour of his respiratory organs—likewise the monthly lady, so retiring and quiet of tongue, who is privileged to upset a household for four weeks at certain well-defined periods of our domestic life; the garthman, too, said he was a "rum un" to look at but still he was a fine boy; and the dairy maid said he was a little duck, which properly translated also meant he was a fine boy. With such an unanimous chorus of eulogy and commendation, whilst still an infant, from so disinterested and capable a source, is it likely—is it probable that Helterton would belie his early promise of growing up a fine boy? Mr. Hopper takes upon himself on behalf of struggling humanity to reply that it was *not* likely, and Mr. Hopper's assertion that Helterton is still a fine boy has lately at Trent side been verified and attested (these are two real good words), in the most complete and satisfactory manner.

Scene: Fledborough Dyke end; boat containing Helterton, Mr. Hopper, and an old lady, slowly and laboriously making its way up the river; sloop anchored near bank, with jovial bargee on board ready for any amount of chaff. After the compliments of the day had been passed (and the day was far spent) and the usual Trent side courtesies exchanged, bargee addressing Helterton, says, "I wish I could blow out a pair of cheeks like yourn, Maister." Helterton smole a grim smile of rebuke and reproof, but bargee would have his say out, and accordingly proceeds:—"He's a fine boy, anyhow." Mr. Hopper remarks that the boy is only 16, and suggests that the old lady in the boat and Mr. Hopper are proud of so fine a son.

Bargee replies "He don't know nowt about the fayther and mother, but anyways he's a fine boy for 16—but that he'll reckon he's a demon of a boy." The old lady nudges Mr. Hopper in the side and suggests that the conversation is taking such a doubtful turn it would be well to enlighten Bargee as to the careful training and bringing up the boy has received, and that he has never been allowed out at night. Mr. Hopper does this, hoping to bring about the discomfiture or at any rate the silence of Bargee, but the latter is in a rollicking humour, and utterly regardless of the fond feelings of parents, adds, "Well, I say he's a demon of a boy, and if ever you lets him out at nights all that I can say is, that I shouldn't trust any of my daughters to walk out with him." Now let it be understood by the readers of these notes that Mr. Hopper and his friends do for the purposes of river-side chaff occasionally assume parental positions which are not strictly in accordance with the relations which actually exist, and on this particular occasion Mr. Hopper had enlarged his family circle by taking unto himself as a son "this fine boy of 16," who was rapidly approaching 30 summers, and the aforesaid old lady instead of sharing with Mr. Hopper the distinction of parentage to so fine a boy, actually stood in the relation of "better half" to Helterton. Now Mrs. H. during the years of her connubial existence with Helterton had fondly and trustingly pictured him as a "mother's own boy," but all at once to have another nature and disposition disclosed to her by so astute and correct a reader of character and human nature as Bargee (and it was plain Bargee was gifted with great intuition) was too much for Mrs. H., and with one wild shriek of dismay at what was suggested she grasped an oar and with Mr. Hopper soon made the waning daylight but faintly disclose the outline of Bargee still murmuring in accents low and sweet, "He's a fine boy for 16, but he's a demon."

Angling on the Trent in 1890 so far as Mr. Hopper's personal experiences were concerned was tip-top—never so many barbel did he land nor such "whoppers." The 1891 season was however a dismal failure—cold, wet, and windy during Mr. Hopper's visit at his Trent-side resort, with the

result that very few carp bream fell victims to the numerous lures and enticements Mr. Hopper presented to them in the most approved piscatorial fashion, and but one barbel was rash enough to partake of the sumptuous repast prepared for the regalement and appetite of Mr. and Mrs. Barbel and the numerous members of the family of that ilk known to frequent the swims Mr. Hopper and his friend Witchdorter had so carefully baited. Good old Witchdorter! He is still alive—and so is friend Brown—likewise also Bobbingmoon, who affects now-a-days to sneer at the fertility from a piscatorial point of view of the lower waters of the Trent; perhaps he is to a certain extent right, but Bobbingmoon cannot complain that he has ever encountered bulls at the Trent side, as he has done when angling nearer home, and he need not cast the supercilious sneer at the old resort which in days gone by has contributed to some of the happy days of his life. No! Bobbingmoon. Mr. Hopper will not for many years to come forsake dear old Marnham and betake himself to the upper reaches of the Trent on the chance of better sport in the unknown waters there.

Mr. Hopper, though an enthusiastic angler, has an eye and a heart for other things and pursuits besides fishing when taking his holiday. There is the cheerful influence and enjoyment of boon companionship both on the river and in the private parlour of the old coaching house; the pretty scenery both of river and woodland, and last, not least, the whole livelong day in the fresh air. Bobbingmoon is still a splendid fellow but getting a bit lazy; he is not quite so reliable for an appearance at the 5-45 a.m. train as but a few years ago he was; he is those few years older—probably they furnish the reason—or probably there is a growing disinclination to leave business. Remember Bobbingmoon!

The bow that's always bent will quickly break;
But if unstrung 'twill serve you at your need.
So let the mind some relaxation take
To come back to its task with fresher heed.

I have exclaimed, "Good old Witchdorter!" and so he is—as good and reliable a boatman as ever he was—as cheery, quaint,

and companionable as ever he was, but Mr. Hopper doubts whether his angling skill increases with his years; he is still a bit clumsy in throwing out from the reel, but so long as he gets his line in the water *somewhere* he is happy. His corns do not grow less in number or less in size with increasing years, and that probably is why he is averse to "hauling" from the bank but prefers comfortably to dispose himself in the stern of the boat and direct its course, smoking his calumet the while. Witchdortor is great at cribbage, and he and Mr. Hopper have played together upwards of 14,000 games. He accepts defeat, when it falls to his lot, in a philosophical manner, and does not show undue exultation when victory crowns his play. It is about ten years since Witchdortor caught a barbel, but he plods steadily on cherishing fondly the memory of two luckless and hungry monsters he successfully skulldragged to bank one evening, and hoping for a repetition of that wonderful performance.

The 1892 visit was, like the 1891 season, a failure in the matter of barbel and carp bream, although there were any quantity of both species of fish, of carp bream especially, as hundreds of big fish up to 5lbs. each in weight could be seen early in the morning "priming," that is, lashing the top of the water in the manner which is peculiar to carp bream. Large barbel up to 7lbs. in weight were "picking" out of the swims, but neither they nor the bream would look at the bait. The fact is the water was altogether too clear and gin-like, and undoubtedly the fish could see the gut line and leads; probably also there happened to be a superfluity of fresh water shrimps upon which they were feeding. This year Mr. Hopper on five occasions fished a bream swim without a bite, out of which the day after the Grimsby People's Park was opened he landed in $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours twenty carp bream weighing in the aggregate 50lbs.—the largest 4lbs. and the smallest $1\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. This year, however, was prolific in eels, and some real beauties were landed—biggest $1\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.—but both the largest number and the greatest in size fell to the rod, and Mr. Hopper wishes to add, the angling skill of a recently added fair disciple of the

gentle art. Oh! those Trent eels were good at supper after a long pull home against stream.

The trout season has been a very good one; the fish were early in good condition, and there were plenty of them. Up to the second week in August Mr. Hopper had landed 77½ brace of the speckled beauties—five of them weighing over 1½lbs. each, five between 1¼ and 1½lbs. each, and about thirty over a pound each. Mr. Hopper returns fish weighing under ½lb. each, and he had not occasion this season to return more than 8 or 10 brace. Twice when fishing with two flies on his cast he had two fish on at once.

Before concluding these notes Mr. Hopper must impart to the readers of them a good joke made by Witchdorter. Whilst on the Trent this year whenever a "big" or "out of the way" word was used by Helterton, Witchdorter, or Mr. Hopper, the exclamation was invariably made "that's a real good word." So many real good words were constantly coming to the surface that it was humorously proposed to compile a dictionary of them, and Witchdorter immediately dubbed the intended new publication as "Dixon's Johnsonary." Good old Witchdorter!—you scored one there.

AUGUST, 1892.

NO. XIII.—A FEW ANGLING INCIDENTS—AND FRIEND
BROWN AND "HAULING."

MR. Hopper's usually cloudless brain and unimpeachable memory must have been obfuscated when writing his last angling notes, as he failed to place on record or even to refer to an incident, or rather a succession of incidents, of a most unusual nature, and which (at least of a similar kind) are not at all likely to have occurred during the eventful angling career of the world renowned Izaak Walton. Doubtless this state of obfuscation was brought about by Mr. Hopper's contributions to Dixon's Johnsonary and the editorial energy he brought to bear in assisting in the compilation and publication of a work of so unusual a character.

The incidents about to be narrated are quite true: it is perhaps unnecessary to state this, as Mr. Hopper's reputation and character for veracity in matters piscatorial are (like Potiphar's wife) above suspicion. Witchdorter, Helterton, Mr. Hopper, and the "old lady" referred to in his last notes, were fishing a deep pool in the Trent from 80 to 90 yards broad (the pool—not the "old lady") and more than 100 yards in length, when Helterton's float showed a decided disposition to disappear under the rippling wavelet which the gentle breeze had caused. Helterton, dubbed "the Commodore" by Witchdorter, that very essence of originality, eager to hook and land one of those 40 pound "pluggers" which the writer of these notes had assured him he would not fail to catch, gave a *yuck* (that word looks funny, but still it's expressive—in fact it's a real good word, and must be put in Dixon's Johnsonary) which was fit to lift one of the sunken barges from the bed of the Trent. Unfortunately Helterton's line was not quite as strong as his muscle, and he parted company with his big float and his tackle and hook, and also with whatever species of the finny tribe might in a moment of hunger and imprudence have affixed itself thereto—"thereto" meaning the hook and not the

float. It seems necessary to explain this, as some people are so awfully green and uneducated in matters piscatorial. Helterton was cautioned, in that quiet way which so well becomes Witchdorter, that it was wholly unnecessary to make so muscular a display of energy when "striking" his fish, and the "old lady" also thought a cod or a haddock line purchased on Grimsby docks might in future be more suitable for such "yucks" than a fine twisted silk line, all which advice Helterton swallowed with a gruesome but withal self-satisfied countenance, for he knew no one else in the boat possessed the necessary muscular development to give anything like such a yuck. However, to hark back; the Commodore had parted from his fish, his float, and his tackle, it was expected for ever, and bitter tears of disappointed hope coursed down his manly but maneless cheeks.

Many years ago, in those far-off days when Mr. Hopper was a small kiddy, there was a popular song called "Bobbing around," and that is just what Helterton's float was seen to be doing about two hours afterwards, for Witchdorter—that clever exponent of the angling art in deep waters (a deep old file is Witchdorter)—had cleverly (Mr. Hopper believes quite unconsciously) manipulated to the surface of the water a mass of weed entangled in, or at any rate attached to which were the Commodore's lost tackle and float with a flounder on the hook. The weight of the weed was however too great a strain upon the clothes-prop Witchdorter was fishing with, and down the whole lot (weed, tackle, float, and flounder, and very nearly Witchdorter, but not quite) went again to the bottom of the Trent. Again did the Commodore weep other salt tears, and his manly cheeks were once more furrowed with the lines those sad tears caused, and yet once again he rubbed his nose against the nozzle of the stone gallon jug of Warwick's best ale (Now, Mr. Warwick, there's a cheap advertisement for you! What shall you stand Mr. Hopper?) and drank deeply and to his heart's content. Notwithstanding those briny tears of Helterton's the float did not put in an appearance again that day; but strange to relate, on the Monday following, being three days afterwards

when the same pool was being fished by Helterton, the afore-said "old lady" and Mr. Hopper, the former again on having a bite brought almost to the surface the same huge mass of weed with tackle, float, and flounder still entangled therein—but the flounder was defunct (the "old lady" says that's a real good word—a regular whopper). Before Mr. Hopper could get the landing net the weed became disengaged from Helterton's hook, and the weed, tackle, float, and flounder slowly descended to the bed (bed is a better word than bottom) of the river, the water there being just upon 20 feet deep. It was considered by all an extraordinary occurrence that in so large and so deep a pool the float, &c., should twice, after being lost, be hooked up again and so nearly recaptured.

But further surprise and excitement were in store, for about two hours later in the day Helterton had a bite and after "striking" he again brought to the surface the same mass of weed with the float still entangled therein, but the defunct flounder had disappeared and in place thereof was a fine eel attached to Helterton's hook. Just as the net was being got ready to land the whole lot the Commodore's line gave way under the tremendous strain to which it was subjected, and weed, float, tackle, and eel slowly disappeared from sight. The fishing was proceeded with, and after another hour had elapsed Mr. Hopper's hook brought up the weed, float, and Helterton's eel, and this time the whole lot was successfully landed into the boat. It is an extraordinary circumstance to have recaptured the float at all, but when the size of the pool being fished, with quick and eddying currents in it, is taken into consideration it is all the more to be wondered at. If Mr. Hopper were not proof against spirits he would believe that pool was bewitched, and that some watery imp was time upon time having a lark with Mr. Hopper and his friends by fastening on their hooks that identical mass of weed. "All's well that ends well," and it is needless to add that the Commodore was overjoyed at the re-capture of his float, which it is hoped will do yeoman service on next year's visit.

Friend Brown is good at "hauling," and as Mr. Hopper had done a tidy spell of it during his 1892 visit the latter sought a little quiet and relaxation in the stern of the boat whilst Brown did a bit of hauling on the bank. Things went well for a time—this was whilst the boat was in fairly deep water—but when the shallows were approached Brown called out from the bank that Mr. Hopper was to bring her near in shore, and he thought he would be able to get her (the boat) along inside the gravel bed. Mr. Hopper thought not, and said so, but Brown possesses the same spirit of independence in wishing to have his own way which people who don't understand Mr. Hopper in *his* case call by that nasty word "obstinacy." Mr. Hopper accordingly brought the boat near in, and in about fifty yards farther on it was "grounded." Brown tugged and Mr. Hopper pushed, but all to no purpose—the boat was fast and the extra rise of water backed up by the tide was ebbing very fast. Mr. Hopper in order to lighten the boat took an oar and leapt ashore, and whilst Brown pushed the stem of the boat Mr. Hopper took the hauling line and pulled like an elephant, and the result was that twice the hauling line broke and Mr. Hopper, after performing several acrobatic somersaults in the air, found himself embracing Mother Earth. A council of war was then held and a resolution passed unanimously that as Mr. Hopper had performed so well upon Mother Earth, it was incumbent upon friend Brown to perform in the water. Sentries were then stationed at various points to give warning of the approach of any of the fair sex, and then Brown, having appealed to the gods and goddesses for protection, divested himself of his garments—nearly all, not quite—and took to the water, and after a Herculean display of strength managed to get the boat into deeper water, and Mr. Hopper then sprang into the boat with the assistance of an oar and left Brown, who was decidedly muddy, to roll himself in what long grass there was on the bank, like unto as a dog doeth when he be wet, before he resumed acquaintance with the garments he had doffed. Brown's rolling took a long time, for the grass was not long and many and prickly were the thistles that grew there.

Brown is fat—a fifteen stoner—and he covered a lot of ground before the rolling was completed and he could be pronounced “disinfected” and fit once more for human companionship. Mr. Hopper inspected that piece of ground where Brown rolled himself, and it presented the appearance of a herd of cattle having lain there overnight. The grass was compressed close to the ground, and many were the stains of Trent mud which were visible in patches. Friend Brown declared some had gone down his throat, and as a “drop of Scotch” is (according to Brown) the only known remedy to take away the nauseous feeling which ensues after swallowing a fair quantity of Trent mud, Mr. Hopper rowed him home and soon caused “the only known remedy” to be several times applied. Under its genial influence friend Brown got his throat cleared and became very talkative respecting his various angling feats on the Trent in days long gone by. They were big feats, all of them—regular “Trent-siders”—so Mr. Hopper puts on his prudence cap, and does not reproduce them in these notes.

SEPTEMBER, 1892.

XIV.—WITCHDORTER'S BREAM FLOAT, THE PRINCIPLE OF
ITS CONSTRUCTION, AND ITS TRIAL "SWIM."

WITCHDORTER'S bream float! Mr. Hopper refers to the one he specially built for his Trent side visit this August—By golly! it is a float—a regular eye-opener; its construction was talked over by Witchdortor and Mr. Hopper and decided upon last July, but the "lines" upon which it should be laid down were entirely due to the inventive genius of the former, who got a special consignment of cork over for the purpose. It was a proud day for Witchdortor when he launched his float in all the glory of its red ochre on the rippling waters of Dunham Dubbs. Witchdortor cast an enquiring if somewhat anxious glance round at those in the boat, hoping to draw forth favourable expressions of opinion respecting his "bantling." The Commodore most truly said he had never seen such a float, and Mr. Hopper thinks he never had. The "old lady" wanted to know if Witchdortor was joking—"Was it really intended for a float, or was it a large model of a newly contrived Trent Conservancy buoy?" Witchdortor's assurance that it was not only intended for a fishing float but actually was one was very emphatic, and he appealed to Mr. Hopper as an old angler to support him in his statement that it was really a float. Mr. Hopper always has due regard and a tender consideration for the feelings of his angling friends (Witchdortor in particular), and therefore at once stated his opinion to be that it was quite big enough to be a float—that it carried plenty of red paint to be a float—in fact he was sure it really was a float *if only* it would show the usual and proper indication of a bite when appealed to by the finny tribe below, but Mr. Hopper thought the fish would have to be a tolerably sized plugger to "bob" the float, which is the mode floats usually are affected when there is a bite. Friend Brown said the float was a "bit large," but no doubt it would be all right if it had a few ounces of

lead to make it "cock." Witchdorter seemed a bit nonplussed at these somewhat doubtful compliments to his skill and ingenuity as a float maker, but he fixed a few ounces of lead on below and then sent his "bantling" on its first voyage. It gyrated and wobbled a good deal, but Witchdorter assured those in the boat who were there to see the trial trip that new floats always acted like that until they had absorbed a sufficient quantity of water to steady them. The Commodore allowed his left lower eyelid slowly to ascend until it was in contact with the upper, and wunk a very visible wink at Mr. Hopper, but was otherwise silent. Mrs. Commodore said the absorption theory was a very good one, but why not build the float hollow to begin with and then fill it with water. Witchdorter said he had thought of that, but it was far from him to be a plagiarist, and he remembered that Artemus Ward had once said something about a merciful Providence having fashioned us hollow, and it might be imagined he had got his idea from Artemus if he had made the float hollow. Mrs. Commodore was plain and outspoken and said "that was rubbish—she didn't believe he (Witchdorter) had thought of a hollow float for one moment." Witchdorter protested he had but said the great difficulty which presented itself to his mind was when he was to make it hollow—was he to make the hollow space first and then build round it with cork? or was he to get a solid bit of cork and then scoop out a hollow inside it, and if so how much? Witchdorter here got a little involved, and Mrs. Commodore at once took advantage of his temporary confusion and said a float built on the latter principle could not possibly be airtight,—the proper basis on which to proceed was first of all to make the hollow the proper size, then blow out all the air; then be sure that no water got into the hollow until the absorption principle should begin to work; then cut your cork exactly the size of the hollow and fit it on by suction, and having done that—why, barring the quills, the rings, and the red paint—the float was ready for use. Witchdorter retired from the combat discomfited, and said he had often talked with men of science about hollow floats but none of them had got over the difficulty,

which Mrs. Commodore had now been able to do, of commencing with a hollow space and blowing out or otherwise exhausting the air it contained.

Meanwhile the float did not sit the water like a thing of life at all; on the contrary every puff of wind blew it over on its side. This was scarcely to be wondered at having regard to the amount of "top" there was out of the water. Mr. Hopper said that Witchdorter's float illustrated the difficulty of an amateur building a float properly—float making was a scientific art and at the same time a great mystery, and he proposed that Witchdorter's "venture" should be disconnected from his rod and line and that the boat anchor should be attached to the float so as to give it a chance of carrying into effect the absorption principle, whilst he (Mr. Hopper) took the boat and his friends to the river bank and gave them an opportunity of admiring the beautiful scenery over the bank previous to sitting down to luncheon. This was accordingly done, and after Newton Cliff and the other adjacent scenery had been duly admired, the good things of this life were made to disappear in a most startling manner—the pigeon pie, which had been so ably raised by Mrs. Commodore, was quickly demolished, and the huge plum pie followed suit until one and all were able to point with the forefinger of the right hand to that portion of the throat known as "Adam's apple," and addressing in imagination his paternal ancestor exclaim, "Up to there, dadda." After Witchdorter's float had been duly toasted in a flowing bumper, a great commotion was heard, and one and all hurried over the river bank to discover the cause thereof. There was the float in all its glory and red paint, and not far from it the Trent Company's two packets "Robin Hood" and "Little John," with their respective captains and crews viewing what they had come to the conclusion was a new buoy placed in the Dubbs by the Trent Conservancy as an indication of some unknown danger below. Neither captain would risk his packet by passing on either side of what appeared to them to be a new danger signal. Mrs. Commodore, ever ready, at once grasped the situation, and addressing the captains assured them they

might safely proceed on their way, as what they thought to be a new buoy placed there for navigation purposes was only Witchdorter's new float. The captains went their way, the anchor was brought up, and Witchdorter once more essayed to make his float "work" properly, but all to no purpose. He was constantly reeling in to see what ailed it, and its ailments were obviously many and grievous, but Mrs. Commodore with tender regard for Witchdorter's feelings, "said it was a beautiful float, only it wasn't hollow." Witchdorter thereupon packed up the float in a tolerably sized packing case and sent it off to Cleethorpes, where it may now be seen at the Deep Sea Exhibition, and there it will henceforth remain with the exception of one day in each year, when it is to be allowed out for Mr. Hopper to show any of his angling friends what strange angling craft can be fashioned even by so ingenious an individual as Witchdorter.

1893.

XV.—“MINE HOST” OF THE MARNHAM HOSTELRY AND A
MARVELLOUS TAM O'SHANTER.

“**N**OW, William, how are you, and how is Mrs. Stokwotcher?” was Mr. Hopper's greeting on his arrival last month at Crow Park Station on the G. N. R., fully equipped from an angling point of view for his annual visit to Trent side, and full of deadly intent towards the barbel and carp bream in those lower waters of the river. “Thank you, Mr. Hopper, we are much as usual, but I have lost two stone in weight since you and Mr. Witchdorter, and Mr. Helterton and his missus were here last year; though I don't know as I'm much worse for that bit of shrinking, as I still pull down a good 15-stone, and I don't think it would hurt Mr. Helterton to shrink a bit, just as I've done.” Now William is mine host of the comfortable hostelry where for 13 years in succession Mr. Hopper and his friend Witchdorter, and occasionally Bowlinggreen Twynkles, Bobbingmoon, and Helterton and his “old lady” have located themselves for fishing purposes. Host William is a pleasant genial man, always ready with a cordial greeting for Mr. Hopper and his angling friends, when they pay their yearly visit. “And Mary, I must not forget her,” said Mr. Hopper, “Is she blooming and still the pride of the village?” Host William replied he did not know much about the village, and what the village thought of his Mary, but she was still as ever the pride of himself and Mrs. Stokwotcher. “A little bit early this year, Mr. Hopper, I think?” said the station master. “Yes,” was Mr. Hopper's reply, the season's an early one you see. Any worms come for me?” “Yes, there's a bag of 2000 for you from Nottingham, and over a stone of ‘scratching’ came for you a day or two ago which has been fetched away. Please come into the office and sign for the worms.” This little business was soon concluded, and the fishing rods (only eight in number this year) having been

duly stowed away in the dogcart, Mr. Hopper and Mr. Stokwotcher were soon on their way to the "Brownlow Arms," which stands within 150 yards of the river, the latter being four miles from the station. Haythorpe was soon passed, and Mr. Hopper noticed that the wheat and barley were almost ready for the reaper, being much more advanced than on the Lincolnshire Wolds.

Normanton was soon afterwards passed by, and a 27lb. halibut (fresh from Grimsby pontoon that morning) having been placed in the charge of friend Brown's musical son, who was awaiting our arrival at the cross-roads, we shortly arrived at Marnham village, and left it behind in the direction of the Ferry. Marnham Hall and park were then passed by, the latter containing the finest walnut trees (and what a crop of fruit they had this year!) Mr. Hopper has ever seen, and also a grand old mulberry tree, and in a very few minutes we were at the "Brownlow Arms," and Mrs. and Miss Mary Stokwotcher were at the top of the steps to welcome Mr. Hopper once more to Trent side and inform him that "dinner was quite ready." Mr. Hopper had to dine alone, as Witchdorter could not get away until the Monday following, but although he would have liked his old angling companion by him at the dinner table, neither his appetite, digestion, nor spirits suffered by reason thereof, and having put himself into his angling costume, Mr. Hopper was soon by the river side on his way to the "Staith" swim, with his light roach rod and other fishing requisites. The river was very low and clear, and very full of that bugbear of anglers—flannel weed (Yes, Mr. and Mrs. Helterton, flannel weed), and Mr. Hopper surmised as he trudged along the bank that sport would not be particularly good this year. How far this conjecture was borne out these notes will in due course state. Arrived at the "Staith," Mr. Hopper decided upon leaving the big fish alone until the shades of evening came on and friend Brown put in an appearance, and having thrown some ground bait in the swim, rod and tackle were soon adjusted, and almost the first swim down a good-sized roach had the temerity to satisfy an enquiring mind or appetite and was duly conveyed into the

meshes of the landing net and brought to bank, there to ponder over his rashness. His ever watchful and aggressive enemy was soon on the bank panting by his side, for a pike just upon a foot and a half long was also seized with an insatiable curiosity to discover what that beautiful little white mass of gentles was which he saw creeping slowly down the current just clear of the ground. He fought strongly and bravely, as he might be expected to do with only a small roach hook in his jaws, and the finest of gut and line and a 9 ounce rod to battle against. So bravely did he hold out that Mr. Hopper for some little time was under the impression he had a carp bream on, but giving him a bit of the butt of the rod he soon showed on the surface of the water, and the landing net was under him in a "jiffy," and he ended his life on *terra firma* instead of his native element, and was next day partaken of with much relish by Charley Cobb, the garthman. Next followed another good roach between $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ lb., and then the finny tribe knocked off altogether, which example was soon followed by Mr. Hopper, who betook himself to the inn to write his budget to Mrs. Hopper and other friends announcing his safe arrival at his destination.

Friend Brown having arrived about half-past 5, after a sumptuous repast upon the halibut, with which he appears to have regaled the remainder of the inhabitants in his village, a move was made to a well-known barbel swim which Brown had kindly ground baited over night. This year, whilst being hauled up river to the said swim, Mr. Hopper kept his eye open and the boat well out in the river, so there was no grounding as was the case last year, when Mr. Hopper's portly, not to say corpulent friend, had to take to the water to get the boat afloat, and then undergo a thorough rolling on the bank to rid himself of the Trent mud which had stuck to him. (N.B. The grass had nearly recovered itself where friend Brown rolled himself last year), and the swim being reached the boat was safely put in position some 15 or 20 yards above the tail end of the swim, and piscatorial operations were commenced as soon as the rods were put together. It was decided to

"float" the swim instead of "plumb or leger fishing" it, the latter being the mode very generally practised by Thames anglers. "Floating" is the Nottingham method of barrelling, and is usually the most killing, besides being the more lively and entertaining kind of fishing. Of course the water to be fished has to be taken into consideration: if there are deep strong eddies and rushes of water, then legering is the more effective style, as there might be difficulty in keeping the bait near the bottom and so effectively working it, but for other water "floating" is to be preferred. By "floating" a swim the water can be constantly fished over the whole length, sometimes 50 or 60 yards, but it is not desirable to fish the swim for more than 20 or 30 yards; whereas in "legering" the bait when once thrown in is kept in one position by the heavy lead leger which is used. With regard to "ground baiting" a barbel swim, it is desirable to bait the swim to be fished 24 hours — Mr. Hopper prefers 36 hours — before fishing it. Whether worms or "scratching," otherwise greaves (being the refuse of the fatty materials out of which tallow is made) are used as the ground bait, they should be inclosed in hollow clay balls of about the size of a man's two fists, and dropped over the side of the boat. Or a "pudding" can be made by mixing up the "greaves" with mud and clay into a fairly stiff lump, and in like manner put over the boat side or end; but it is scarcely necessary to make use of clay balls or puddings if the place to be baited be what is known as dead water or a very slow stream. Only sufficient ground bait should be put in so as to provide for its being consumed some hours before the swim is to be fished; in other words the amount should be so adjusted as to allow an interval for the fish to regain their appetites.

Both nicety and judgment are required in ground baiting a swim. The angler must avoid glutting the fish, and on the other hand should not put in too little and thus leave them without anything to attract or amuse them in the interval between their eating the ground bait and the angler fishing it. The angler must be guided by his knowledge of the river

and the circumstances of each individual swim. With this digression Mr. Hopper may be permitted to remark that friend Brown is a splendid angling cook, and makes "puddings" to perfection. Mr. Hopper rather fancies himself in this particular line, but he is not a patch upon Brown, who makes the muckiest but at the same time most "hold-together" puddings angler's eye ever rested on.

The swim fished on this particular evening is known as the "turn post" swim, and has rather a slow stream, and is this year (the river being low) about 9 feet deep. There was no response to Mr. Hopper's first few swims down, but a decided tug presently indicated a bite. Down went Mr. Hopper's float, and he was fast in a fish which did not go away like a barbel, and in two seconds or so Mr. Hopper simply said "chub," and so it proved to be, for very presently a leather-mouthed rascal of 2lbs. was in the capacious landing net and safely landed in the boat. The very next swim down brought a huge tug and rush away, and Mr. Hopper was again fast in another good sized fish, which proved to be a stout thick well-conditioned chub of 3½lbs. These two chub were all the fish the swim yielded that evening, and the conclusion come to by friend Brown and Mr. Hopper was that the swim was scarcely suitable so early in the season for barbel, and they were more likely to be found in the more rapid streams.

Mr. Hopper's companion had no luck, but before quitting the swim the ground was baited in view of a visit next evening. The boat was then taken down in quick time to the ferry and chained on to the large weighing boat in readiness for use the next morning, as it had been arranged during the row down to the ferry to fish Dunham Dubbs in the morning, and with that object to rise at a quarter-past 3 and have a try at the carp bream at the "Dubbs," which is or are two or two-and-a-half miles down the river. Mr. Hopper and friend Brown then adjourned to the comfortable hostelry, and after replenishing the inner man and playing a few games at cribbage, they betook themselves to their respective couches at 11 o'clock, mutually promising to be up

and ready next morning at 3-15 prompt. Mr. Hopper therefore proposes to take leave of the readers of his angling notes until next week.

P.S.—Since penning the foregoing notes Mr. Hopper has been gudgeon fishing to a favourite resort which necessitated a short journey by rail. Needless to say Mr. Hopper had not arranged to go alone. Bowlinggreen Twynkles was to be one of his companions, and the other—yes! he was there, on the platform. His name is Rugless, but on that particular morning Mr. Hopper thinks “Douglas” would have been a more appropriate name. As Mr. Hopper entered the station at 5-35 a.m. there stood Rugless in proud possession of the platform, and looking for all the world as if he had just purchased and paid for the whole of the undertaking known as Grimsby Town station. Rugless was wearing a Tam o’ Shanter, the bob of which at the top was nearly as big as a pawnbroker’s ball, and the left side of his “Tam ” sloped with an artistic droop until it rested gently on his left shoulder. Rugless was not bootless—oh! no. He had on a pair of hip boots which mounted nearly up to the top of his thighs, and which were capacious enough, even when his legs were inside them, to have held another pair of legs very comfortably. Rugless was a grand looking man that morning, but Twynkles and Mr. Hopper on arrival at Louth took care to smuggle him through a quiet part of the town where he would not be much observed. The water bailiff charged Mr. Hopper and his friend Twynkles 6d. each for their angling tickets, but he said he could not think of allowing anyone wearing such a pair of boots and such a distinguished looking Tam o’ Shanter to fish the ancient waters of the Louth navigation under a fee of 1s., and Rugless was mulct a “bob” accordingly. The day’s proceedings produced 250 roach and *two* gudgeon; the latter species had wandered away, goodness knows where, in consequence of the length of water fished being partly drawn off to refill the next two ponds in the canal.

SEPTEMBER, 1893.

XVI.—THE “FERRY SWIM” AND MR. HOPPER’S BIG
BARBEL—WHICH HE LOST!

“WELL,” said Witchdorter, addressing Mr. Hopper, “If you or any one else had ventured to tell me a week ago that I, Witchdorter, should not drop my line in the Ferry swim this visit, I should not have believed either you or that other individual.” Such were Witchdorter’s words as he and Mr. Hopper left Trent side after a most enjoyable week’s angling and outing on the old river—but so it had been! Several reasons caused the desertion of this famous old swim which in years gone by has contributed so much to the enjoyment of the annual visit. No, *one* reason of itself sufficed for such neglect of an old favourite swim, but probably good sport in fresh waters (newly tried swims) was foremost in inducing such base ingratitude on the part of Mr. Hopper and Witchdorter. *Nextly*, [that’s a real good word for Dixon’s Johnsonary] there was an awful amount of flannel weed in the shallow swims (and the Ferry swim is only six or seven feet deep), and lastly the swim is not what it once was; it has been diverted by dredging operations more into the middle of the river and the large weighing boat from which Mr. Hopper has in years gone by fished and landed many a barbel—many of them 5-pounders and once an 8-pounder—is now quite on the edge of the current instead of being well in the middle of it. The Trent Conservancy Commissioners have put in a new weir about 60 or 80 yards above the weighing boat and landing stage, and this new weir has caused the “set” of the current to be more in the middle of the river than it was formerly; all right for navigation purposes, but, blow it! death to the angler’s hopes. A weighing boat, by some called the Ferry boat, is the large boat used at a ferry for taking droves of cattle, conveyances, and even loads of hay or corn in harvest time across the river, and is from 12 to 15 yards in

length, so it will readily be understood what a boon it is to the angler to get so far out into the river and fish a good swim from its river end, and without any swaying about of the boat.

Many a time have Mr. Hopper and Witchdorter sat fishing the Ferry swim until 11 o'clock at night—leger fishing, the line taut and every bit of weed coming across, and every bat flying against the line, making believe just for the moment that patience was being rewarded by a barbel or other denizen of those waters seeking his supper. Oft and oft again has the "leger" been threaded and a new gut trace put on by the disc of the moon. And that old ferry boat was so convenient in point of distance—only 200 yards from the "Brownlow Arms"—for Mrs. Hopper to come down about half-past 9 with some of Warwick's best XXX and a plate of bread and cheese. Oh! fellow anglers, it was a grand old swim, but Mr. Hopper fears its best day has gone by, and that it has been sacrificed to make a channel deep enough for the "Robin Hood" steamer to carry merchandise up river. There are many pleasant memories and associations in connection with the old ferry swim and the ferry weighing boat, but beyond mentioning the home coming every evening of the rooks to the tall aspen poplars close by, the cry of the curlew high up overhead, the flight of wild ducks, the rapid swim down the river of the rapacious otter, the steady flight of the heron laden with his capture of fish, time and space forbid reference to more of them than these. Although Witchdorter was so ungrateful as not to try the old swim, Mr. Hopper felt he must not wholly neglect so old a friend, so one evening whilst Witchdorter and friend Brown tried the bream swim without result, he, Mr. Hopper, both floated and legered the Ferry swim with some prime old cheese. Mr. Hopper thought that this display of loyalty and allegiance to an old swim would be rewarded at any rate by a barbel or roving chub, but it would seem those cautious fish do not estimate faithful allegiance on the part of the angler to an old swim in the same manner as he would have them do; so when the two bream fishers first mentioned returned with

empty creels, Mr. Hopper was also a fit subject for commiseration, as he had not been able to circumvent the wariness of a single fish ; but better luck was coming in a day or two.

The river was very low and clear, and Mr. Hopper concluded that "scratching," having regard to the condition of the water, would prove a more attractive lure for barbel than worms, and accordingly thought a stone and a quarter of the "condiment" in question, which Mr. Hopper had ordered from Nottingham and brought on with him from Crow Park station, was likely to be of considerable service in whetting the appetites of such barbel as were frequenting those reaches of the Trent. Three Nottingham anglers had certainly fished the "Staith" swim all one day with worms, and had succeeded in catching three or four barbel, but 4lb. represented the weight of the largest fish, and Mr. Hopper intended to land something bigger than that. Having ground-baited a good barbel yielding swim in the manner indicated in Mr. Hopper's last chapter, he and Witchdorter repaired, full of confident anticipation, to the swim in question, which seemed to be fairly free from flannel weed, and it was determined to float it—Nottingham style. The water was about 13 feet deep and very rapid. The swim was close in shore, along which were large blocks of stone forming the beau ideal of a home for barbel. The swim was at least 150 yards in length, and the boat was moored into position at the top end of the swim in preference to the tail-end. After finding the depth and getting just the quantity of weight on for the float to carry, fishing was at once commenced in earnest. Witchdorter had not floated down more than seven or eight yards of the swim when down went Mr. Hopper's float with a vicious tug and sudden bolt away that at once assured Mr. Hopper he had hold of the right sort this time. Witchdorter quickly reeled in his line so as to give plenty of playing ground. However, after the first run Mr. Barbel proved anything but a tough customer, and he lacked the dash and courage which his species possess in so eminent a degree, and after very few minutes he was safe in the boat. He was a fine fish of quite 5lbs., in good condition, and

there was nothing in his condition or appearance to account for his offering a resistance so very different from the stubborn and obstinate opposition his species usually display. However he was quite good enough to keep for Charlie Cobb's dinner next day, so he was consigned to the sack, there to lament over his rashness and his relish for "scratchings." It was not to be Witchdorter's day so far as barbel were concerned, but he dressed Mr. Hopper down properly at cribbage after the return to the hostelry that evening; in fact he slated Mr. Hopper right well this year's visit and considerably reduced Mr. Hopper's formidable lead on the year's play. But this is not fishing talk, so the gentle reader must be taken back from the cribbage board to the barbel swim which rejoices in the name of the "Land o' Cakes hole"—why *hole* Mr. Hopper is at a loss to know, for the swim is a very rapid one. Well, being back at the hole in question, imagine, kind reader, you observe Mr. Hopper and Witchdorter sitting in their boat very intent upon their floats. Down goes Mr. Hopper's float, up jumps the end of his rod, and he is fast in a big barbel—a real big one this time. He bolts down the swim for at least 40 yards, boring hard to get to his home amongst the large stones spoken of above, and Mr. Hopper has to put extra pressure on him, but do what he will Mr. Hopper cannot stop him, and he is just telling Witchdorter that it is a regular plugger—at least 12 or 14 lbs.—when the pulling and tugging cease and Mr. Hopper has the mortification of seeing his float rise to the surface and swim away down the river, never to be recovered. That loss he can get over, but to be broken by a whopping big barbel when Mr. Hopper thought he had him safe was very galling. It was the line which had broken, and seeing that it had been strong enough for the 5-pounder previously caught, Mr. Hopper relied on it perhaps too implicitly for larger and stronger fish. However, the pressure brought to bear upon Mr. Barbel was quite necessary, as he would otherwise have fought his way down amongst the big stones and when there, soon have made an end of the tackle he was held by. No more barbel ventured upon an evening meal, and although Mr. Hopper and

Witchdorter persisted until the shades of evening had well drawn in they had no more success, and their imaginative minds pictured the lost barbel swimming about with the hook in his snout and about a dozen yards of line trailing after him. Needless to say if this was a correct representation of things going on below, the other fish might well be scared and take their hook and not those attached to the lines of the two patient anglers above, who followed the example set them by the finny tribe and set off with the boat homewards, having first left a real good pudding in the swim in readiness for the time when the scared fish should recover sufficient confidence to return to their usual haunts. Mr. Hopper will therefore defer an account of his further barbel experiences until his next article.

SEPTEMBER, 1893.

XVII.—WITCHDORTER, AND THE EARLY RISING OF THE
ANCIENTS.

WITCHDORTER is a man of many good parts and excellent qualities, but he has one slight failing from the true angler's point of view and that is, he awakes badly in the morning—he is not only a difficult subject to arouse, but even when that has been accomplished he *must* have ten minutes more of his precious bed. For years Mr. Hopper was in doubt whether Witchdorter was not just a wee bit cunning in the early hours of the morning, but he is now almost forced to the conclusion that his friend's sluggishness is due in a measure to an infirmity in his acoustic arrangements. Mr. Hopper has found by experience that it is useless to put the alarm in the watch pocket over Witchdorter's head,—under his pillow—on the small round table near his bedside—he (Witchdorter) *will* sleep on his good ear and tilt his deaf ear in the air, or as the French proverb says, “Dormir les poings fermés,” (which, being very liberally translated means “to sleep on both ears”—literally with one's fists closed) with the result that Mr. Hopper has to attend to the awaking part of the business entirely himself.

Now Mr. Hopper and Witchdorter had sworn a great oath to each other, as in ancient times, to be up at a quarter to four in the morning following the capture of the 5lb. barbel recorded in the last notes, and to go to Dunham on the war path against the carp bream, and fish for barbel in the cool of the evening. Mr. Hopper therefore, intent upon having Witchdorter out of bed at the time named, wound up the alarm most viciously to go off at 3-45 a.m., and placed it as near Witchdorter, as, having regard to the drum of his ear, he could conscientiously do, and having ascended his own four-poster (Witchdorter occupying the other four-poster in the large room set apart for

their nocturnal repose) was soon in the arms of that estimable lady or gentleman known as Somnus—what schoolboy is there who does not know the lines from Horace?—

Somnus agrestium
Lenis virorum non humiles domos
Fastidit, umbrosamque ripam.

Which being freely rendered is—

Sleep knows no pride,
It scorns not cots of village hinds,
Nor shadow-trembling river side.

Mr. Hopper must have given that alarum the stomach-ache when winding it up that night, for punctually at 3-45 a.m. it went off with an explosion like the siren fixed at Hewitt's Brewery. Mr. Hopper was out of bed in an instant, but not so Witchdorter—he was enjoying “a mortal good sleep,” so Mr. Hopper let him have ten minutes more before finally ejecting him from his four-poster. The morning was a grand one, and no time was wasted in getting to the river side and pulling down to Dunham. The “Land o' Cakes” hole looked very tempting in the early morning light, but the previous evening's determination to fish it in the evening was adhered to, so it was somewhat reluctantly left behind and the turn for Dunham Dubbs reached. Bream were seen to be “priming” in a nice length of water opposite the turnpost, so the boat was brought up, and about 16 feet of water being found it was determined to give this new water a trial. Some worms were soon put in for ground bait and then two floats were quickly wending their way down stream. Down went Witchdorter's float in a most extraordinary manner—very unlike the bite of a bream—and he was fast in a fish, which for a minute or so took him here, there, and everywhere, but Witchdorter's stout rod quickly told him that resistance was useless, and Mr. Hopper had the pleasure of placing the net under a handsome perch of just upon 1lb. in weight. It was then Mr. Hopper's turn—a carp bream, not a large one certainly, but of sufficiently takeable a size to go into Charlie Cobb's supper pot, then a good eel or two, a flounder or two, a dace, and an odd bream or two more, and then—they stopped biting, so after persevering a little longer it was decided to drop the boat down to the “Dubbs,”

which was done, but the bream would have none of us—they came to the top of the water, winked one eye at Witchdorter and the other at Mr. Hopper, as much as to say, “all right, old gentlemen! we, know you and your little game—you’ve been here 13 years running and you have taken away a lot of our nearest relatives weighing as much as 4lbs. each and as we are up to your wiles you may sit in your boat and smoke—you won’t catch us—put that in your pipes and smoke it.” The bream were right—certainly one delicate looking individual was captured but goodness gracious! he was a bag of bones, and had either been disappointed in love (if fish are so affected) or had been off his grub a very long time. The “Dubbs” did not yield well so it was decided to go back to dinner and drop down for the barbel later on in the afternoon, and therefore the stone was brought up, Mr. Hopper put ashore with the hauling line over his back and he soon (a matter of 60 minutes) trotted Witchdorter back to the Ferry, that gallant old craftsman (except when a bit of rowing had to be done) doing the easy in the stern of the boat, and puffing away at his much-loved pipe. In the afternoon it was decided to have a try at the Bream Swim so the boat was taken up the river, Mr. Hopper as usual doing the hauling from the bank and Witchdorter making believe, as he reclined in the stern of the boat, that he was doing all the work, whereas he was so abominably lazy and inattentive to his duties, that twice he caused the boat to ground and once he nearly turned it over, a due regard however for his own precious skin brought him to a lively sense of his responsibilities and peril, and Mr. Hopper had no further cause to complain before the fishing ground was reached. The temporary absence of Witchdorter’s usual skill as a boatman, brought to Mr. Hopper’s mind the school-boy’s mock latin verse of unknown origin—

Patres Conscripti took a boat and went to Philippi,
Stormum surgebat, et boatum overturnebat,
Omnes drownderunt, qui swim-away non potuerunt,
Excipe John Periwig, who was tied to the tail of a dead pig.

Three Nottingham anglers had most assiduously fished the bream swim without result for three days, and it was therefore

with a lively sense of satisfaction that Witchdorter's first swim down found him hold of a real good fish, whose play at once showed that it was a carp bream. He was such a big deep bellied fellow that it was all Mr. Hopper could do to get him in the landing net, which is big enough to hold a hat-box, but that was successfully brought about, and on weighing Witchdorter's capture it pulled down 4lbs. good. That was a tip-top start and hopes ran high at the prospect of a good afternoon's sport, for the swim was alive with thumping big fellows. They kept coming to the surface of the water by scores and lashing their tails in the manner peculiar to bream, but they would have none of the dainty morsels offered them until just upon tea time, when Mr. Hopper landed one of 1 lb. 10 oz. A few eels and flounders had also been caught, but there was no occasion to use the big sack which had been taken in the boat, and which both Mr. Hopper and Witchdorter on the capture of the 4 pounder had fondly pictured would have taxed all their strength to carry up the steep little bit of hill rising immediately from the ferry to the lane leading to the Inn. Tea was quickly disposed of and a most enjoyable row down the river of a little over two miles brought the boat and its occupants once more to "Land o' Cakes" hole. A strong wind was blowing down stream and it required two large stones to prevent the boat from dragging from her moorings, and as it was, a side rope was also put out and lashed to some rushes conveniently growing by the river side. All this had been done very quietly so as not to disturb the swim. The rods were soon over the end of the boat, but nothing responded to the first swim down, notwithstanding the dainty and tempting morsels of scratching—for all the world like strips from a white kid glove. "Surly beggars!" said Witchdorter. "You wait a bit and see, it's only just barbel time," said Mr. Hopper, who had floated about twelve yards of the stream for his second journey down, when "I've got him," said Mr. Hopper, as a real good fish went tearing down the stream with him and taxing all his angling skill. Mr. Hopper had, however, tried his line and tackle well before commencing, as he

did not intend having any more smashes. The fight lasted a good way into a quarter of an hour, and Mr. Hopper had six or seven real good runs away before the barbel would give in and show up alongside of the boat, and when he did so and caught sight of Witchdorter with the huge landing net in his hand, down he bored again, but each effort was feebler than the preceding one had been, and Witchdorter very shortly had him in the net and then in the boat. He was a very short handsome well fed fish of 5lbs., and the play he had given was of a very high order, and, need it be added, Mr. Hopper was somewhat elated at landing another five-pounder so early on in the evening.

Witchdorter had no luck—he had one bite which he missed, and then Mr. Hopper had hold again—this time a regular whacker, quite as big as that which had broken him the night before. He rushed down the swim for at least 35 or 40 yards, boring down to the stones, and Mr. Hopper put all the pressure he dare on him to get him into the river, and all at once he made a bolt from the swim right into the middle of the river. He stopped there a bit being quite 50 yards from the boat, and Mr. Hopper began to reel him in, preparatory to his making his second run, and had got him in about 15 yards when off he went again and this time it was "good-bye." Needless to say, Mr. Hopper wound up expecting to discover he had been broken, but he found everything intact, so he came to the conclusion that he must have hooked him lightly in the lip and that the skin had given way. He certainly felt more than double the weight of the five-pounders previously caught. For some little time there was no response to either Mr. Hopper's or Witchdorter's very pressing invitations to supper, but shortly before it was time to "shut up shop" for the night, another good tug let Mr. Hopper know he had hold once more. "Not so big this time," quoth he to Witchdorter, "but all the same a very game one." He led Mr. Hopper a pretty dance in the quickly darkening shades of evening before he was safely landed, and he was then found to be 3lbs.—a nice plump fish and in the pink of condition.

Mr. Hopper's pudding-making ability was then requisitioned, and a real beauty was dropped in the swim in readiness for a visit early next morning, and then tracks were made for home, and Mr. Hopper did his hauling in double quick time as far as the willows by the river side permitted, and he then gathered in his hauling line and took his seat in the boat, and he and Witchdorter pulled home against stream, doing the remainder of the distance in a little over 40 minutes.

Mr. Hopper and Witchdorter now know all the sharp runs and currents in that part of the river and so avoid them, taking to the slack water as there the current is not very strong. Arrived at the ferry, everything was made neat and trim in the boat in readiness for an early start next morning, and then after an hour at cribbage and a pull at the briar root, the four-poster were again sought with a view to *rising up early in the morning*. Early rising was evidently a habit of the ancients. Holy writ tells us that Abraham, Abimeleck, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, David, Job, Elkanah and Hannah, one and all, *rose up early in the morning*, and Darius rose *very early* in the morning, but these good people did not take their annual holiday at Trent-side and go barbel fishing.

Mr. Hopper is quite sure that early rising is beneficial in many ways, and tends to cheerfulness and contentment. It should always be remembered that "Cheerfulness smooths the road of life," and the lines of the old couplet show the reverse side of the picture—

A cheerful spirit moveth quick,
A grumbler in the mud will stick.

And yet another—

Be always as cheerful as ever you can,
For few will delight in a sorrowful man.

It is well said that "man is a bundle of habits," and so he is. Mr. Hopper and Witchdorter represent two good-sized bundles, and they go in for early rising when at Trent-side. Whether Witchdorter would take the first prize in that line without assistance may be doubtful, and the readers of the early portion of this chapter will probably come to the conclusion that, but for Mr. Hopper, the four-poster occupied

by Witchdorter would be able to boast, most mornings during the annual visit, of our friend's presence many hours after the lark had sung his morning song aloft.

The real good sport has yet to be recorded, and as this chapter has already run into some length, Mr. Hopper will reserve his further experiences. If Mr. Hopper is trespassing too much upon the patience of his readers by the lengthy record of his outing at Trent-side this year, he can but apologise and say—

If you'd learn patience superfine,
Go you to fish with rod and line.

SEPTEMBER, 1893.

XVIII.—WITCHDORTER'S BARBEL, AND ABOUT THE WAIN
BOAT.

SO far Witchdorter had been unlucky, fate seemed to be against him in the matter of once more capturing a barbel. There was evidently "something wrong in the state of Denmark," and Witchdorter cogitated and pondered long before retiring to roost why this should be. Mr. Hopper apparently had kept pace with the growth of fish intelligence. Why should not he (Witchdorter) "subtilise" in a more practical manner his deceptive arts and once more circumvent the wary barbel? A determined look settled upon Witchdorter's usually placid countenance just before bed time; it was a look full of murderous intent on the morrow against the watery denizens of "Land o' Cakes" hole, and Mr. Hopper then felt the barbel usually resorting to that swim would be minus a relative or two before many hours had passed. As the morrow was to witness the departure of Mr. Hopper and Witchdorter from Trent-side, friend Brown was to accompany them in their last fishing expedition, and punctually at half-past four next morning he made his appearance, and in less than an hour the boat was in position at the head of the swim. Mr. Hopper was the most expeditious of the three in getting his rod put together and being ready for action, and had his line in the water whilst the other two were scuttling their feet on the boat bottom. "I wish you two fellows would make a little less noise with your feet, for if I'm not mistaken I had a gentle knock from a barbel just now," quoth Mr. Hopper, and before he had time to utter another word, sure enough, the well-known tug immediately came, and Mr. Hopper was fast hold again the first swim down. Away he went with lightning speed right down the swim. "My word though he's a good fish" said Brown, as he noticed the play of Mr. Hopper's rod, and so he proved to be. He fought like a demon. Over and over again after being reeled in ten or fifteen yards did Mr. Barbel bolt

down the swim, but he had met his fate, and in a little under quarter of an hour he was safe in the meshes of the landing net, and when subsequently weighed plumped down the scales at 5lbs.

Whilst Mr. Hopper was adorning his hook once more with a tempting morsel, Witchdorter had got ready, and his float was not ten yards from the boat when down it went and Witchdorter's line was making his reel sing again, and it was plain he had hold of a good fair fish. To say the least, Witchdorter's mode of "playing," his fish was unique, in fact altogether so original and quaint that Mr. Hopper being fearful that Witchdorter might lose his barbel suggested another way of handling it. Witchdorter was irate, and said "Now, Mr. Hopper, I've hooked this fish and not you, and I intend to play him in my way and my way only—not yours—if I lose him it will be my own fault." Witchdorter has an emphatic way of saying things, so Mr. Hopper watched the fun which lasted well into ten minutes, and in the result Witchdorter's "way" proved successful, and friend Brown had the satisfaction of putting the net under a very nice 4lb. barbel. Witchdorter surveyed his catch with dignity quite imposing in its bearing and he looked a veritable monarch; he now appeared impassive, cool, and free from excitement, and for all the world as if catching a 4lb. barbel was an everyday event with him. Little would an outsider have thought that ten years had gone by since Witchdorter had landed one of that species, but Mr. Hopper had counted the years as they rolled by and recollected well those two luckless barbel Witchdorter had landed one evening, a decade ago, at the Ferry swim.

Witchdorter was soon floating the swim again, and only very few minutes had elapsed before he had hold again—this time something a good deal smaller—and two or three minutes sufficed to get inside the boat a barbel of a little over 2lbs. It was now Mr. Hopper's turn, down went his float and it was plain he had hooked a fine fish; he kept a very tidy distance between himself and Mr. Hopper, and it was well into twenty minutes before a glimpse could be got of him.

He still had a lot of "go" in him, but patience, aided by a little bit of something else (Mr. Hopper is a bashful man and therefore refrains from giving that something a name—he knows too that the readers of his notes are so intelligent) was instrumental in safely bringing on board the boat a barbel of 7lbs., a fine lengthy fish, but still he ought to have weighed another couple of pounds considering his lengthy proportions.

So far that morning Mr. Hopper and Witchdorter were two and two, but it was not long before the former was ahead. In order not to pile up the agony any longer, suffice it to say that Mr. Hopper shortly landed two more barbel of $2\frac{1}{2}$ and 3 lbs. respectively. And then it would appear that the surviving barbel in the swim held a consultation and passed a resolution to the effect that so many of their near relatives had so mysteriously left the breakfast table it would be more prudent to defer the satisfying of their appetites, and being proper kind of barbel, they rigidly observed the sense of the resolution, with the result that the three anglers found the game was up and accordingly desisted from fishing any more and put up their rods, pulled up the stone, and the lot having fallen once more to Mr. Hopper to do a trudge on the bank with the hauling line, he, nothing loth, was put ashore and soon had his friends and their capture at the Ferry. And so ended their barbel exploits for 1893. Friend Brown had caught nothing, but he was occupied most of the time, net in hand, in landing Mr. Hopper's and Witchdorter's catches. However, he went ashore before leaving "Land o' Cakes" hole and left a mourning card on the bank recording the demise of sundry barbel in the adjacent swim through overpowering curiosity and too eager appetites. Beyond that mourning card and these notes there is nothing whatever to show that "Land o' Cakes" hole had lost any of its finny habitués.

A celebrated Frenchman once wrote his own epitaph, the last line of which was as follows:—"Friends, I beg of you not to load my tomb with bad verses." Mr. Hopper does not know what verses friend Brown wrote on the mourning card in memory of the departed barbel, but Mr. Hopper feels sure that they would be appropriate. No doubt the surviving barbel shed *real* tears of

sorrow at the loss of so many of their clan. I say "real," for there is the old saying "Very many shed tears merely for show; and have perfectly dry eyes when no one is looking on." This sentiment coming to mind brings also a recollection of the following lines on the same subject :

Jane weeps not for her dad when none is by ;
 When some one enters she begins to cry.
 Not by its wish for praise is trueness shown ;
 He mourns indeed who mourns when he's alone.

During the week those two anglers (Mr. Hopper and Witchdorter) did not confine themselves to trying for big fish but laid themselves out on several occasions when the sun was hot for small fry, such as roach, perch, white bream, and willow blades, and met with a fair measure of success. The capture of small fry will not however interest the readers of these notes so Mr. Hopper will not weary them with details of this kind of angling. In the matter of barbel Mr. Hopper had landed seven of the aggregate weight of 30½ lbs. Not far short of an average of 4½ lbs. per fish which, to say the least, was a result gratifying to Mr. Hopper, who brought four of his fish to Grimsby for the inspection of several of the angling fraternity. With the exception of Bobbingmoon, another gentleman, an old Trentsider living in Ainslie-road near the Park, who shall be nameless, and one or two others, Mr. Hopper is not aware of any anglers in Grimsby who have seen barbel, and accordingly Mr. Hopper's five and seven pounder respectively created a good deal of interest when submitted for inspection to a select coterie on his return to Grimsby that Saturday evening.

Mr. Hopper had three days previously despatched from Trentside by parcel post two barbel of 5lbs. and 3½lbs. to some friends but they discreetly gave them away for some one else to make a meal of. In order to make barbel at all palatable at the dinner table they require to be cooked the same as a pike—that is, with some very good stuffing and equally good thick gravy. Mr. Hopper's friends, to whom he had consigned the barbel in question, enquired of their friends, to whom they had given the barbel, how they had cooked them, and in reply received the assurance that they had either boiled or steamed them and

partaken of them with much relish. Mr. Hopper believes that his friends had a good quiet laugh to themselves over this little incident, as they related to Mr. Hopper on his return with much gusto, how much their friends had enjoyed the *steamed* barbel. By jove! Barbel without stuffing and gravy! Mr. Hopper's palate revolts against such a dish so served up, but "where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." Witchdorter also took his two barbel home with him and exhibited them for one week in the Cleethorpes aquarium in the natural history and curiosity department, where they excited very considerable interest, and the receipts of that very entertaining resort were in consequence very much augmented at the end of the week of show. Mr. Hopper assumes that being fresh water fish, they would be decidedly *fresh* at the week's end, but he believes that that little incident would, and in fact did not deter some enterprising fish gourmand from making a modest outlay in the purchase and treating his palate to a delicacy it had not before ventured on. The result of such experiment had not reached Mr. Hopper at the time of penning these notes and probably never will. Mr. Hopper, however, devoutly wishes that barbel partaker is still alive and has come to no harm! with that pious wish he will take leave of the barbel species until the season of 1894, when he intends, health permitting, yet once again to make an onslaught upon that game and sportive species of the finny tribe.

And now Mr. Hopper must eat humble pie; he feels levelled to the dust; in fact he is grovelling therein. Query: Can man grovel in the *dust*—is it not rather the mire? But whether dust or mire, Mr. Hopper is grovelling, and all through Witchdorter, who has brought him to book about his spelling. Mr. Hopper has never claimed to be infallible, but he did think he was a fair speller; alas for mortal frailty! The readers of these notes will have noticed that Mr. Hopper has several times alluded to the large ferry boat as the weighing boat. Until he had heard Witchdorter call it, as he thought the *weighing* boat, Mr. Hopper had called it the large ferry

boat, but, bowing to Witchdorter's superior knowledge and wisdom in riverside expressions, he followed what he thought was Witchdorter's word, and over and over again has referred to the *weighing* boat. Mr. Hopper had certainly pondered over in his mind several times why it was a *weighing* boat—it was certainly big enough to weigh almost anything. It would carry a load of corn and three horses across the river, a drove of cattle, a flock of sheep, a crowd of people at fair time—they all weighed a lot—and therefore Mr. Hopper thought it was a weighing boat, and accordingly he repeats once more—alas for human infirmity! Witchdorter politely writes Mr. Hopper as follows: "By the way—*re* fishing notes—Why weighing boat, instead of wain boat? Hope Mrs. Hopper is first-rate!" Mrs. Hopper is not first-rate—on the contrary, she is much depressed at the idea of Mr. Hopper being caught tripping in his spelling—in fact she now insists that one of the principal reasons she consented to marry Mr. Hopper nearly a quarter of a century ago was, because he spelt so nicely in all the letters he wrote to her during courtship, and now, at one fell swoop from Witchdorter, her fond dream is dissipated—in fact, her connubial happiness in the future will constantly be jeopardised (that's a good word Mr. Commodore Helterton) by the risk of discovering further frailties in Mr. Hopper she had not thought him subject to. Mr. Hopper has taken down his most recent edition of Dixon's Johnsonary and he there finds the following definition of "wain," a wagon, a carriage for the transportation of goods on wheels, a constellation, Charles o' Wain; "Wain-bôte," timber for wagons or carts. Witchdorter may be right, but Mr. Hopper desires to point out to him not only the spelling of "Wain-bôte," but also that the large ferry boat is not on wheels, on the contrary "it swimmeth the water like a thing of life," and is not a *wagon* or *carriage*—but still Mr. Hopper grovels and eats humble pie because Witchdorter may be right and he (Mr. Hopper) may be wrong.

Wild-geese chases! well, rather, just a few? What angler has not been on such expeditions when seeking fresh fields

and pastures new? Twynkles feels he has been left out in the cold too long. He says all the angling talk has been about Mr. Hopper, Witchdorter, and friend Brown—nothing about poor old Bowlinggreen Twynkles. Well, if Mr. Hopper were to record the wild-goose chases that Twynkles and he have been, the narration of them would be far from entertaining. Before closing his notes for 1893, Mr. Hopper would like to add a few lines he came across some days ago, which are very suitable reading for those silly individuals who are constantly writing on the windows of railway carriages and other public places. The lines are these—

When I see a person's name,
Scratched upon the glass,
I know he owns a diamond,
And his father owns an ass.

SEPTEMBER, 1894.

XIX.—WITCHDORTER'S DEATH—IN MEMORIAM!

MR. Hopper's old and valued friend Witchdorter must pass out of these notes for ever, for on the 10th of December last he was called to the bourn whence no traveller returns. He loved this beautiful world, and all of good that it contains, but in one sense he was prepared for the dark journey all must take. Gladly would he have stayed yet awhile here below had it been willed he should do so, but he was found ready. It is with quiet and assured conviction that these confident words are written by the friend and comrade he left behind him, for truly Witchdorter's life on earth had long been but a cheerful and happy preparation for the great "hereafter." No friend more steadfast and constant, more true, could be found than Mr. Hopper's angling companion for a dozen years on Trent side. And he is gone! his memory cherished by those nearest and dearest to him, and, as a man true and good, mourned by all with whom business engagements or social intercourse brought him in contact. Three days' illness (complications of influenza and pleuropneumonia) sufficed to lay him low, and then King Death reigned supreme over his mortal remains which, midst sorrowing relatives, friends, and numbers of his late fellow workers—midst beautiful emblems of loving regard and warm respect and admiration for his qualities as a man—were laid to rest "till the shadows flee away." Poor old Witchdorter! Trent side ne'er knew a clumsier angler; ne'er a more contented or genial one; ne'er a better boatman in all that pertains to the management of a boat. Ever ready to pull an oar or do a bit of sculling from the stern; to do a bit of sheering if he could capsize friend Brown into two feet of water and mud when the latter was too intent upon the coppers for harvest measuring, but ne'er a bit ready to do a bit of hauling on the bank in the teeth of the wind. No, he was not strongly inclined that way, but preferred seeing Mr. Hopper trudge the bank with

hauling line over his shoulder whilst he stowed himself in the stern of the boat puffing his 'baccy, and for want of a rudder directing the boat's course with one of the oars dangling in the water from the stern. But too many memories would be awakened and too many incidents would be recalled if Mr. Hopper permitted himself to linger in retrospect on the days gone by in pleasant companionship with his lamented friend on the old river. No more wonderful floats will be made to excite the curiosity of Trent-siders; no more will he chaff and bandy jokes with the men on the river steamers and barges, for he is gone! his lips are silent here below, but surely and truly he sings Above the praises of his Maker. Witchdorter! valued friend! these notes close on thy name for ever.

It is difficult to pass all at once from a mournful subject to one where gloom and sorrow in no sense hold sway, but Mr. Hopper feels assured that his angling friends in Grimsby would like to be informed of a few of his piscatorial doings (exploits has too heroic a sounding, having regard to Mr. Hopper's well-known modesty, to be made use of here) on Trent-side during his annual visit this year. Well! followers of the gentle craft, "times was bad," as Artemus Ward or some one else says, "and that considerable" for some days, but Mr. Hopper was patient and the good times came—occasionally. To begin with, the weather was unsettled and cold, the river higher than usual by some inches, and when it rose 36 inches, as it did one day and night of 24 hours, there was *just a bit* of floating weed, both top and bottom, coming down, and it took three or four days for that rise of water to go off—during those bad days Mr. Hopper only caught three barbel, largest $4\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. and smallest $3\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. Of course a few roach, eels, flounders, perch, and dace were caught also, but carp bream held aloof, and although they were "rolling" and "priming" at the top of the water by hundreds, they would ne'er look at any kind of bait. By-the-bye, Mr. Hopper during these first bad days had as a companion the well-known Grimsby angler known as "Bowling-green Twynkles," whose identity will be apparent to lovers of the rod as a prize winner in a recent local angling competition.

Mr. Hopper cannot just now remember what represented the prize, but he knows it was not the "wooden spoon." There were gold and silver medal winners, so no doubt our friend won the shoemaker's prize. Knowing as he does "there's nothing like leather"—possibly it may be a leather medal which friend "Bowlinggreen" now wears round his neck as a "charm" when angling. It is common knowledge in angling circles that "Bowlinggreen's" catch in the competition spoken of would have been much heavier, but he had the misfortune to be drawn next "peg down" to "Rugless," who again astonished the porters and other railway men at the Town station by appearing yet once again in his "Tam o' Shanter," and those wonderful boots which envelop so much of his martial looking legs. Now Rugless in this costume would terrify an infuriated bull, and it will readily be imagined that when the poor little fishes came to the top of the water for fresh air and beheld friend Rugless they hastened to regions more remote where there were no such spectacles to behold and terrify. The fish being so driven away from Bowlinggreen's immediate vicinity he could not be expected to make a heavy catch, and the conditions of the competition being that each angler was "pegged down," he was compelled to remain where he was. Report hath it that it rained somewhat that day. This is a long digression, but readers of these notes must excuse Mr. Hopper for referring to these little local matters instead of proceeding uninterruptedly with his Trent-side experiences.

Harking back to that portion of these notes where it is stated "Bowlinggreen Twynkles" accompanied Mr. Hopper to Trent-side it is scarcely necessary to explain that that ardent angler was dead upon catching a barbel, and after prolonged waiting, some of it marked by exemplary patience and some of it by—well, fellow anglers, you must be content to guess—our barbel hunter became suddenly excited and exclaimed, "I've got him; by jove, he is a whacker!" There Twynkles stood holding on like grim death to something which was bending his rod nearly double, but whether to a barbel or mother earth, or a sunken sloop in the bed of the river, he did not know. Picture, fellow

anglers, our excited friend "holding on" in the boat, over 16 feet of water, in the manner described. If you will kindly do so and keep our excited but worthy brother clubman in your eye for a short period, Mr. Hopper will partake of his supper and tell you in his next notes what happened, and how much it (the barbel—not the supper) weighed, and also give you some other angling lore.

XX.—TWYNKLES AND HIS FIRST BARBEL, HIS TRIUMPHAL
MARCH THEREWITH.

YES, undoubtedly Twynkles was holding on, and in a manner to put to confusion all preconceived ideas of Trent anglers. The leather pouch or socket in which friendly society banner poles when carried in a procession are placed will be a familiar object to the eye of all Grimbarians, who by the way, dearly love a procession, whether it be a funeral or Band of Hope demonstration. Now Twynkles, forewarned by Mr. Hopper of the monsters to be met with in the deep and eddying pools of the Trent, had provided himself with one of the leather sockets in question, and with the usual strap appendage had girded himself therewith in readiness for the fray. No sooner, therefore, did Twynkles have hold, as he thought, of one of these monsters than he slipped the butt end of his rod into the socket to the depth of about 10 inches, and with the socket planted well in the middle of his "corporation" he was in truth "holding on." To the unpractised eye there was no tremulous movement or "playing" of the top piece of his rod to betoken that 16 feet below the surface of the water Mr. Barbel had spread out his huge forked tail like a fan, put his dorsal fin well up, extended his anal fins, and ploughed his snout-shaped nose into the bed of the river, or fixed his four beards or wattles upon the weed at the bottom, so that he could not be moved from his position; but Mr. Hopper's eye had noticed when Twynkles "struck" that he had driven his hook home into one of these powerful fish, and when Twynkles, being uncertain of having a barbel or a sunken barge at the end of his tackle, handed his rod to Mr. Hopper "just to see what it was," he replied, "It's a barbel sure enough, and look out for him bolting as soon as I give you back your rod." This implement of destruction being handed back, and the butt end deposited in leather socket aforesaid, Twynkles put extra strain on and held on like grim death; but, singular to relate, the barbel would not move a peg for at least five minutes, and then he went for a nice run, and

so satisfied Twynkles that he had hold of something a bit more lively than a sunken barge. After a lot of boring down, however, he had to come to the surface, and in another five minutes Mr. Hopper had him in the capacious net, and Twynkles' first barbel just pulled down the scale at $4\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.—a very thick, short, well-conditioned fish.

Barbel almost invariably, on being struck, bolt away a good distance, but this fish, for some reason known only to *himself*, (Mr. Hopper believes it was a *gentleman* fish,) reversed his usual tactics and remained quite stationary at first. Probably he thought to himself, "I'll *lay low* at first; it's only Twynkles; and then I'll make a sudden bolt and break him." If so he miscalculated upon the forces opposed to him—and there certainly was a certain amount of brute force—and his bleached bones are now on the dung-heap in Charlie Cobb's back yard, that burly labourer having feasted off him to his heart's and stomach's content next day. It is always necessary to keep a tight line on a barbel, and when he is exhausted put the landing net in the water as carefully as possible. Never dash the net in the water right in front of his nose, or, as an old angler once said, "Perhaps the sudden fright may make him give an unexpected bolt when you are not prepared for it." Doing this may lose both fish and tackle, and the angler with poetic imagination will perhaps think of the quotation—

The waters wild closed o'er the child,
And I am left lamenting.

Mr. Hopper has devoted a good deal of space to Twynkles' first barbel, but then it was his *first*, and that means a great deal in an angler's career. It is an "event," and when it takes place the day is a red-letter one and ever to be remembered. The moral to be deduced from Twynkles' first barbel is—always be provided with a leather socket in which to put the butt of your rod, as it will enable you to "hold on" properly. For reasons peculiar to himself Mr. Hopper does not so provide himself; but then he hasn't a "corporation" like Twynkles, who, needless to relate, was in the seventh heaven of delight at his prowess, and having put ashore and appro-

priated a poor widow's clothes prop, and suspended from the middle thereof the luckless barbel, he and Mr. Hopper formed themselves into a triumphal procession, and marched to the hostelry at which they were staying to the revised tune of "Twynkles comes marching home," which the successful captor certainly rendered with his well-known whistling ability. The barren days gone by were forgotten—and they had been barren indeed so far as barbel were concerned, for save one 4-pounder caught by Mr. Hopper they would not look at the tempting worms dangled to their view. In fact their all but abstinence brought to Mr. Hopper's memory the lines from Hood's poem, which slightly altered to suit Mr. Hopper's poetic fancy, runs thus—

At a brandling once barbel would gape,
But they seem to have alter'd their forms now.
Have they taken advice of the Council of Nice,
And rejected the Diet of Worms now?

Friend Brown turned up in the evening, as usual, and Twynkles' barbel was toasted in right royal fashion. Mr. Hopper must now take leave of Twynkles and his barbel and, as the Cheap Jack at the fair says, "Show you something else."

The readers of these Notes must not jump to the conclusion that when fishing for barbel with worm the angler does not catch other fish, for although barbel may not be "on" he often catches bream, perch, flounders, an odd chub, or a roach or two, dace, sometimes a pike, and eels. A poet once wrote—

The Trent hath such eels, and the Witham pike,
That in England there is not the like.

The two largest eels known to have been taken from the Trent were caught on a night line with a nest of young blackbirds for bait. Mr. Hopper is not romancing. It is a "solid fact" that he is stating, and the two weighed rather over 15lbs. They were caught but a very few miles higher up the river than the resort where Mr. Hopper makes his annual visit. There are said to be four different sorts of eels in the Trent—two that migrate and two that do not; but Mr. Hopper is not going to weary his readers by describing the different species. Old Trent anglers say that the migratory eels, which are silver bellied, come into

the Trent from the sea with the swallows—(Mr. Hopper thinks it right to explain that of course these old anglers don't mean that the swallows come from the bottom of the sea and travel alongside with the eels, but that they both arrive about the same time)—and that they disappear from the river when the swallows go away.

There is a very common notion prevalent amongst fishermen that eels are nocturnal fish, and that at night they will travel over land from one sheet of water to another. Some years ago a correspondent of the *Fishing Gazette* asserted that an old fisherman told him the eels came out of the river during the night and fed on the worms on the grass, and that the old fisherman said he had seen them scuttling back into the river on his approach. Query, was the old fisherman having the correspondent "on" a bit? Mr. Hopper has been out in the vicinity of rivers and ponds under all conditions of weather, and he can aver with truth that he has never met an eel taking a cross-country journey, nor has he ever met with eels having their supper on the grass and seen them "scuttle," as the old fisherman averred he had done. Perhaps other Grimsby anglers have been more fortunate in this respect or more observant than Mr. Hopper has been.

Anglers are often reproached by persons who do not follow "the gentle art" that they are cruel beings by causing pain to the fish when hooking them, or to the worm when threading it on the hook; but it is a fact pretty well known that cold-blooded animals do not feel pain in the same manner that warm-blooded ones do, and the lower the animal organization the less sensibility to pain it has. A fair test is whether a fish which has been hooked and has got rid of the hook will come again for the bait. Some years ago Mr. Hopper was spinning for trout with a minnow set up on a treble hook, and he hooked a trout of about 1 lb. weight and played it for about 10 seconds, when it got free from the hook and bolted under a tree stump from which it had come to rush at the minnow. The line was at once thrown into the stream, which was clear and low, and the trout again made for the minnow, and was again hooked, and once more he disengaged himself and retired in haste to

his haunt under the stump. Losing no time, Mr. Hopper again spun the minnow past the trout's home, and he again rushed out, and, this time seizing the minnow savagely, paid the penalty for his temerity by being safely landed on the bank and deposited, after a tap on the head, in Mr. Hopper's creel. Will any one, after this episode, aver that that particular trout experienced such a sensation of pain as to intimidate him from again rushing on to his fate? They may say that Mr. Hopper was an awful duffer not to catch him the first time, but that is beside the question under discussion. Yet another instance. This year, when fishing on the Trent with a well-known angler called Billyboy, Mr. Hopper landed a barbel of 4½lbs weight in whose jaw was a hook which Mr. Hopper, *only the day previous*, had given to Billyboy, and to which hook was attached 16 or 18 inches of gut tackle. Billyboy had been broken several times in succession by barbel, and it was under the circumstances of such breakages that Mr. Hopper handed over to Billyboy the aforesaid hook with a strong gut trace attached of about 18 inches. Mr. Hopper naturally thought that Billyboy would attach such trace to his line, but instead of doing so he fixed it on the remainder of his own brittle gut trace, which had already on at least four occasions proved too weak. The result was, of course, another smash, but not in Mr. Hopper's length of gut. Now if this barbel had been so pained by the hook which had been firmly fixed in his jaw for about 24 hours, with a hanging appendage of nearly a foot-and-a-half of gut constantly to remind him of the unusual incumbrance in his mouth, is it reasonable to suppose that he would have taken a precisely similar bait to that which the previous day had concealed something he had not bargained for? Some people will probably say, "Oh! poor beggar! he must have his supper." But if he was in great pain Mr. Hopper thinks he would not feel strongly inclined that way. A poet once wrote—

The poor beetle which we tread upon,
In corporal suffrance feels a pang
As great as when a giant dies.

But that is a tale that won't wash with Mr. Hopper, whose opinion is that fish when hooked bolt away because they feel intensely indignant at having their liberty so unceremoniously interfered with. So much for the sense of feeling in fish.

SEPTEMBER, 1894.

XXI.—BILLYBOY AND "TWO LOVELY BROWN EYES."

AS the barbel, after the rise of water alluded to in a previous article had gone off, persistently declined to regale themselves on the well-scoured worms offered for their repast, or, as non-anglers would put it, "to allure them to their fate," Mr. Hopper determined to endeavour to bring them on the feed lower down the river with some well-scalded "scratching." So on the following Monday morning he dropped down the river in the boat, and, knowing where Billyboy was to be found, consulted him as to the best swim to bait. That astute and knowing angler, after a little cogitation, fixed upon a rapid stony swim about 16 feet in depth, which he said had not been fished for at least five years, and he promised to do the needful that evening in the matter of dropping in the scratching made up in clay balls, in return for which Mr. Hopper was to give him a seat in his boat when giving the swim a trial next evening. On Tuesday evening, therefore, Mr. Hopper dropped two miles down the river in his boat, and, having picked up Billyboy on the way, the boat was soon moored at the head of the swim, some 16 or 18 yards from the side, just clear of the huge boulders of stone which ages ago had been placed in the bed and at the side of the river to protect the bank from the force of the winter floods. A shelter of big granite blocks laying about in confusion affords a real home for barbel. Floating was first tried, but there being no response, except a 2-pound chub which Mr. Hopper safely negotiated into the boat, a Council of War was held, and it was determined to "leger" for them, it being considered that in consequence of the fineness of the water the gut trace when travelling down the swim could be seen by the fish. Mr. Hopper had no immediate success, but Billyboy had any amount of attention paid to his bait, and five times in succession he was broken when striking his fish, losing a hook and portion of his gut trace each time. This was an unfortunate beginning, as what effect five barbel,

each with a hook in his jaw and gut tackle depending therefrom, would have in the way of alarming the other barbel in the swim was uncertain, but Mr. Hopper came to the conclusion that anyhow such a display of bridles down below would not be encouraging to the other denizens of the swim. Presently Billyboy landed a nice barbel of $3\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., and yet twice again was broken, Mr. Hopper meanwhile not having had even a "touch." Something was evidently wrong in the State of Denmark, so Mr. Hopper reeled in his line and took all the shot off his gut trace. This proved effectual almost immediately, as Mr. Hopper had a tremendous "knock," and, striking, found he was into a good fish, which after about 10 minutes play he brought over the capacious net held ready by Billyboy and with a sharp lift he had the fish in it. But, lo and behold! Mr. Barbel made a sudden lurch, and the net being old and a good deal worn, he broke and went clean through the meshes. Having regained his native element he put Mr. Hopper in a fine fix, as he had to play and "kill" him with the line through the broken meshes of the net. However, in a minute or so, owing to Billyboy's skilful manipulation of the net, Mr. Hopper was able to bring his fish to the side of the boat, and all the fight being gone out of him Billyboy seized him across the gills and hauled him into the boat. Weight, $4\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. The shades of evening were now fast coming on, but before putting up rods for the night Billyboy and Mr. Hopper landed four more barbel; weights 3 lbs., 4 lbs., 5 lbs., and $3\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.—in all six barbel weighing in the aggregate $23\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., or an average of nearly 4 lbs. per fish. This was not so bad for the evening immediately following the previous day's baiting.

Friend Brown being duly informed of the catch, he arranged to give Mr. Hopper a call next day at 4 a.m. This was good-natured of Brown, as he lived quite two miles away. Brown was punctual, and Mr. Hopper being ready when he put in an appearance they, after a rum-and-milk each, had soon traversed the mile-and-a-half to the willow bushes at Fledborough Dike end, where the boat had been left safely moored the night previously. Ten minutes' rowing brought them to the swim, but

owing to the terrific wind which was blowing it was found necessary not only to anchor the boat with two large stones down, but also to put out a mooring line to a fence on the bank. This being done operations were soon commenced, but for nearly an hour no response was made to the kindly attentions lavished upon such members of the family *Cyprinus Barbatus* as happened to have arisen thus early from their watery couches. Mr. Hopper does not by this mean to suggest that they had watered their couches with their tears shed in regret at their rash relatives taken from their family circle the previous evening, but it stands to reason that, being at the bottom of the river, their couches would be more or less damp. At the end of one hour Mr. Hopper landed a three-and-a-half pounder, and then it commenced to rain as if the floodgates of—well, say the river Styx—had been opened and the waters let loose. This state of affairs put the barbel clean off, and made the boat decidedly the reverse of comfortable as a temporary sitting place, so friend Brown and Mr. Hopper in common parlance “chucked” it, and hauled up the stones, and pulled to the fence end, which projected slightly over the river, and having secured the boat there then trudged for a mile over as wet fields as it has ever fallen to Mr. Hopper’s lot to travel, and made for Dunham village, where the “feast” was being held. Fishing was out of the question, in consequence of the downpour of rain, so “high times” were held at the feast, and after friend Brown (who, shocking to relate, is a married man) had flirted desperately with all the brown-eyed damsels in the village who would be flirted with (Mr. Hopper meanwhile having been most discreet—in fact it took him all his time to look after Brown) it was decided about 5 o’clock to try and find Billyboy and return to the river for the evening’s fishing. Mr. Hopper’s search after Billyboy was very short, as he soon found him “feasting” upon some lovely brown eyes in a snug corner of a certain tavern. Billyboy, being a bachelor, was forgiven by Mr. Hopper, who, however, insisted upon the brown-eyed enchantress being left to the tender care and soothing caresses of some other love-sick swain. A bucolic individual being soon found to supply Billyboy’s

place, Mr. Hopper (whose conduct, by-the-bye, had been most proper and unimpeachable all day) conducted his two angling companions back to the boat, and it having ceased to rain a real good evening's sport was entered upon. In 2 hours and 10 minutes Billyboy and Mr. Hopper had caught ten barbel, ranging in weight from 3lbs. to 5lbs. Brown, for some reason, did not catch one: it was his bad luck, and bad luck alone, as he is a good angler. Oh! that walk home in the dark and in the pouring rain, for the floodgates were opened again as soon as the homeward journey was started of. And oh! that awful weight of captured barbel on Mr. Hopper's back! The climax was reached when one of the bass handles gave way, and barbel after barbel fell to the ground. Mr. Hopper, of course, had to stop and pick them up and mend the bass as best he could, but several times during the journey home the bass gave way, with the result that sundry barbel fell out, and each time Mr. Hopper had to repeat his previous experience of collecting the scattered barbel and repairing the bass. However, the shelter of the friendly hostelry was at length reached, and the barbel being weighed and distributed amongst the villagers, Brown and Mr. Hopper settled down to an evening's cribbage and consoling pipe, until the time arrived when Brown thought it would be prudent, in view of Mrs. B. awaiting his return, to start for his two-mile walk home.

A little more barbel talk shortly, and then further notes must go over until the 1895 season, should Mr. Hopper still be on the globe to do the penning.

SEPTEMBER, 1894.

XXII.—“MARSHALL'S PARLOUR,” AND A BIT OF BREAM
FISHING.

MR. Hopper having on his two visits to the swim alluded to in the last article been instrumental with the co-operation of Billyboy in removing 17 barbel from their watery home, was not particularly sanguine on the occasion of his next visit there about circumventing any of the others still remaining, as it was probable the baiting was “going off” after three days, in consequence of the “scratching” not being such a novelty as it had been. Having these misgivings Mr. Hopper accordingly deferred his visit on Thursday until quite the evening, but he and his angling mate were well satisfied with their sport, as in a very short time they landed four barbel, the largest 6lbs., which fell to Mr. Hopper's rod. It was a splendid fish, and on being struck about 25 yards from the boat ran out in a very few seconds at least 40 or 50 yards more line, and it will readily be understood that a 6lb. fish at a distance of 70 yards boring down at the bottom of 16 feet of water is a tolerably heavy weight at the end of one's line and quite sufficient to tax the skill of the angler and excite his keenest ambition and desires to prove the victor in the struggle. A little under a quarter of an hour sufficed to bring about the end of as game a barbel as it has ever fallen to Mr. Hopper's lot to capture, but he has caught in previous years heavier fish—one last year pulling down the scale at 7lbs., and one a few years ago reaching 8lbs.—the one last referred to occupying 25 minutes of Mr. Hopper's time before he was landed. The swim yielded no more barbel, due probably to a very heavy rainfall which caused a rise in the river and either dispersed the fish or put them off the feed, but 21 barbel, ranging from 3lbs. to 6lbs. (some of them 4½lbs. and 5lbs. each), from one swim were not to be sneezed at, and Mr. Hopper felt more than elated with his success. The best day's barbel fishing on the Trent Mr. Hopper ever heard of was about 40

years ago. An angler caught thirty-two fish; five of them weighed from 12 to 15lbs. each, about a dozen were from 6 to 10lbs. each, and not one of the others was under 3lbs. It is stated—and Mr. Hopper's authority is from a very reliable source—that the thirty-two barbel weighed 224lbs., being an average of 7lbs. each fish. All that Mr. Hopper can say is that he would have liked to have had the catching of such a glorious bag, but he would have been precious sorry to carry it home. Sport of this kind is not to be met with on the Trent now-a-days, and must not be expected

Until nets are things of the past,
And poachers cease to exist.

There is not much rhyme in the above couplet, but Mr. Hopper thinks it looks better set out as poetry or blank verse than as ordinary prose matter. However, now and again one hears of good days, and just after Mr. Hopper left Trent-side this year friend Brown wrote to inform him of a catch of 96lbs. weight of barbel in one day by one angler, about a mile and a half below the swim where Mr. Hopper had been angling with the success previously alluded to. But this was quite put in the shade about three weeks or a month ago on the Thames by Mr. J. P. Wheeldon, the well-known angler, who in one day killed 164lbs. weight of barbel. Mr. Wheeldon has some angling notes every week (which he styles *Piscatorial Hotchpotch*) in Wednesday's "Sportsman," and Mr. Hopper invests his modest copper every week for that day's issue, not only on account of Mr. Wheeldon's good pen'orth, but because there are angling reports and results from all the principal rivers and fishing districts in England, our own county of Lincoln amongst the rest.

Several little incidents occurred during Mr. Hopper's visit to the Trent this year. He discovered on more than one occasion that Twynkles had not learnt wisdom by his experience of a few years ago, when he nearly launched Mr. Hopper and himself into eternity—this means 32 feet of water—by sitting down facing the stem of the boat and pulling away, in other words *vis-a-vis* to Mr. Hopper, who of course planted himself

properly, and this too when a river steamer with full steam up was close upon them. Mr. Hopper is not yet tired of this life whatever Twynkles may be, and he doth accordingly beseech Twynkles to give up his bad habit, which is so full of murderous intent against Mr. Hopper's remaining lease of life.

Another little incident happened the first day of Mr. Hopper's holiday by the river side. Having left his plumb sinker at home which he uses to ascertain the depth of water, he foolishly tied his scissors (which every angler on the Trent must have) just above his hook to plumb the depth: result, scissors stuck fast between some big stones 12 feet below, and pull as Mr. Hopper would they would not return, and one pull too strong was given, breaking Mr. Hopper's line just about two feet below the quill float. Mr. Hopper rigged up another tackle and threw in, and on next pulling up found his hook and tackle had wrapped round the broken line below the float, and he brought up scissors and tackle intact. This was very strange, considering the Trent is from 80 to 100 yards wide at that particular place, and from 12 to 16 feet deep.

Yet one more incident. The readers of Mr. Hopper's notes will recollect a most amusing dialogue with a rollicking bargee on a sloop at Fledborough Dyke end, who, addressing Helterton, expressed such an earnest desire that he "could blow out a pair of cheeks like your'n, maister," and who said H. was a "fine boy," and that he, the bargee, had some "darters," and that he was a prudent parent and looked well after his "darters" when fine boys like H. were on the river. Well, this same bargee was there again with his sloop in the identical spot where it was moored two years ago, and, at once missing Helterton he dropped a silent tear of remorse—well, not quite silent, for Mr. Hopper heard its briny splash when it mingled with the waters of the Trent—at the "fine boy's" *enforced* absence from Trent-side this year. It is perhaps as well for that bargee that Helterton was not with Mr. Hopper this year, for the latter feels assured it would have gone bad with the bargee if H. had got well at him. However, H. was not there, and after a word or two of friendly riverside chat with

Bargee, Mr. Hopper pulled on up stream under the friendly shelter of the drooping willows there fringing the river bank.

Mr. Hopper has not much more to add in the matter of this year's experiences on the river, but as usual he learnt several little wrinkles, amongst others that when there was a rise in the river of a few inches only from rainfall the carp bream would leave the deeper swims of 16, 20, and 30 feet and seek comparatively shallow swims of 9 and 10 feet deep. One morning Mr. Hopper was fishing a swim known as "Marshall's Parlour," about 9 feet deep, and there being a few inches rise on, all at once carp bream began to roll over at the top of the water disclosing their broad sides. It had just started raining like "Billy ho," as they say, and Mr. Hopper went to his bag of worms and flung cocoanut after cocoanut full of broken-up worms at them, and got them (the bream as well as the worms) down below, and then commenced operations. Mr. Hopper had with him only his dace rod, five pieces weighing $7\frac{1}{2}$ ounces, and the finest drawn gut and dace hooks, and the very first swim down just as his float reached "Marshall's Parlour," about 12 or 15 yards away, he struck and landed a fish which weighed rather over a pound. It positively siled with rain, which not only percolated through Mr. Hopper's garments to his august skin, but ran off his cap down his neck and back in various channels, until Mr. Hopper was well nigh deluged. The chief difficulty was to get the wet line to work; it clung to the rod side and made it quite a business to swim the float down to where the bream were feeding. However, Mr. Hopper, notwithstanding the discouraging and adverse state of the elements, managed to "float" the swim down 14 times—12 swims down he had a bite, and he managed to land 9 bream, largest 3lbs., which, needless to say, taxed his $7\frac{1}{2}$ ounce rod and his fine line and tackle to the utmost. Mr. Hopper's boots being nearly full of water, and the boat also, he baled out and then pulled up his stone anchor, put in the row-lock irons, got his oars and pulled to the ferry. Just previously to the bream putting in an appearance Mr. Hopper, in the generosity of his heart, offered three Nottingham anglers who

were fishing from the opposite bank a seat in his boat, but they "thought they would remain where they were," although Mr. Hopper was catching some very fine dace. Well, those Nottingham anglers must have had "fits" when they shortly saw Mr. Hopper hauling in a carp bream nearly every swim down, but he felt there was no occasion, having once shown his politeness, to repeat his offer. They caught one eel and one flounder from the bank, and spent a good part of their morning under the "stewy" protection of a haycock; but, Godfrey Daniel Simpson! as a friend used to say by way of exclamation, when he missed an easy stroke at billiards, Mr. Hopper did get wet that day.

Once again on a rise of water another day did Mr. Hopper find the bream at "Marshall's Parlour," and yet again did he land some to keep him company in the boat. "Marshall's Parlour" proved a productive swim on other occasions. One morning Mr. Hopper landed eight varieties of fish, to wit, dace, roach, perch, white bream, eels, flounders, Tommy Ruff and pike; all with worms as bait. The dace caught in this swim were exceedingly fine fish, but they did not quite equal in size seven dace which Mr. Hopper caught last October a few miles out of Grimsby. Those seven weighed 3½lbs., and he had on the same occasion a dozen good roach.

At the time of penning these notes Mr. Hopper has two days' angling in view—one for gudgeon and one fly fishing for grayling. In readiness for the latter he has got down from London a dozen of the most beautiful grayling flies ever seen, very small and beautifully set up. Mr. Hopper, in pleasurable anticipation of these two days' outing, brings his Notes to a close for the 1894 season, and bids all his angling comrades good-bye until next year, wishing them one and all good sport and plenty of it.

1895.

XXIII.—Izaak Walton, and 19th Century Angling.

MR. Hopper is getting ancient—he is years older than when he first commenced to pen his angling notes—but the scythe-bearer has not diminished Mr. Hopper's eagerness to make a brief sojourn by the waterside where—

“Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Are clad in living green;”

and when he can snatch a day or part of a day from his desk he is not slow to do so. Mr. Hopper has now written his angling notes for a goodly number of years, and he cannot therefore introduce his 1895 notes with—“Here beggynyth the treatyse of fysshynge with an Angle,” which Mr. Hopper believes was the heading of the first contribution to angling literature. One is apt to wonder somewhat at the spelling, but Board Schools did not exist in the 15th century, when Dame Juliana Berners, Prioress of Sopwell, first treated the subject of angling in the “Boke of St. Albans,” published by Wynkyn de Worde in A.D. 1486, which was a period within a decade of Caxton's first printed book in England. “The Compleat Angler, or the Contemplative Man's Recreation,” by Izaak Walton, was not published until 1653, but that angling was a favourite recreation and pursuit even in those far-off days is attested by the fact that during his lifetime five editions of his book were published. Between the appearance of the “Boke of St. Albans” in 1486 and “The Compleat Angler” in 1653, the only other book on “fysshynge,” of note that Mr. Hopper knows of is Leonard Mascall's “Booke of Fishing with Hooke and Line,” which made its appearance about 1590. Good old Izaak undoubtedly used to fill his creel pretty easily and frequently during his earthly pilgrimage, but Mr. Hopper feels tolerably sure that if the venerable old gentleman were to revisit the river-sides, lakes, and ponds in this latter part of the 19th century, he would find not only the angling art greatly perfected since his time, and all the implements of destruction used in the gentle

craft immensely improved upon, but the instinct of fish greatly developed, with the result that they have become most "canny." Angling is no modern pastime: it flourished quite in the early ages, for one of the earliest Greek poets tells us—

"Of beetling rocks that overhang the flood,
Where silent anglers cast insidious food,
With fraudulent care await the finny prize,
And sudden lift it quivering to the skies."

It would appear therefore that "ground baiting" was practised even in those days, but the modern angler, unless quite a novice or tyro, would scarcely try to manipulate his 4lbs. bream or barbel into the embrace of an adjoining tree, or make use of the adjoining meadow for depositing therein his catch. One angler only "of that ilk" does Mr. Hopper know, and he rejoiceth in the name of "Twynkles." Yes, he can "yuck" with a vengeance, and still he thinketh he hath a "gentle touch." And yet one—just one more ancient bit of poetry—

"A bite! hurrah! the length'ning line extends,
Above the tugging fish the arch'd reed bends,
He struggles hard and noble sport will yield
My liege, ere wearied out he quits the field."

Mr. Hopper went to Trent-side full early this year, being induced thereto by considerations of health. It was the second week in July when he sought the familiar river-side—quite three weeks too early for barbel—but he hoped that he would have a fair time amongst carp bream, and in that respect his expectations were realised, as although they never came really "on," as sometimes they will do on the Trent, still Mr. Hopper caught some fair baskets, his largest bream being 4½lbs. The weather proved very unsettled, the wind blowing great guns most of the time, and if there happened to be a lull in that respect for a day or two, a real good old-fashioned thunderstorm filled up the gap, and, needless to say, a heavy downpour of rain accompanied these electric disturbances. The result was that Mr. Hopper was only just settling down to his visit when the storm water from the Derbyshire and Staffordshire rivers and hills came down, and quickly put a rise of three feet above the ordinary summer level of the Trent. The spring tides also began to put in pretty heavily,

and so prevented the storm water from getting away Humberwards between the tides, and the result was an abnormal rise of between five and six feet in the river. This extra push of water had the effect of driving all kinds of large fish—particularly carp bream—from their usual haunts into shallower swims. Bream are sluggish, lazy fish, and dislike above all things to have to head against a greater body of water than usual. Oh! he's a very knowing fellow is Mr. Bream! An extra rise of water will often send him on the sloping sides of the Trent hauling banks, which are not covered with water unless there is an unusual lot of water down the river, and there he will feed in a foot or eighteen inches of water on the worms which the rise brings out on such grassy slopes. Up to the time of the Trent getting so bank full Mr. Hopper had had fair sport, catching in addition to bream other kinds of fish, including chub, roach, perch, eels, flounders, dace, and that curious little abortion called "Tommy Ruffe." With the discolouration of the river eels began to be on the run, and Mr. Hopper landed some weighing over 1½lbs. each, and with a rod weighing only half-a-pound and fine tackle Mr. Hopper found his angling ability tested to its utmost capacity.

Mr. Hopper was without a mate this last summer's visit, but friend Brown (who is now three-score in his earthly career) usually put in an appearance in the evening, and helped to make the time pass merrily. He is just as keen an angler as ever, but Mr. Hopper refrains from accompanying him on his chubbing expeditions. Does Twynkles remember his day's outing in 1890? But that is ancient history in Mr. Hopper's notes.

Very few salmon went up the Trent this season; in fact the net fraternity did not take out their usual £5 licence. Blow the nets, says Mr. Hopper,—they do more harm to river fishing than anything—legitimate rod fishing will never harm a river like the Trent, but after a "fresh" of water these net fishermen will sweep every shallow where they can draw their nets and pack off their catch to the Manchester market, where all fresh water fish find ready purchasers in the Israelites.

The trout streams about Grimsby ran very low after the middle of May, and what with the "tickling" abilities of certain

joskins living in the villages near the streams, and those old poachers, the herons, more than one of the brooks was well-nigh depleted of its ordinary stock of store fish long before the "close" season set in. Mr. Hopper understands that the Laceby and Little Coates stream is well-stocked with fish, and that under the fostering and vigilant care of the syndicate which now controls the stream the trout are both numerous and increasing considerably in size.

Some fine roach have been captured out of the Louth and Tetney Navigation, but they have been few and far between—the largest was about 1 lb. 9 oz.—but those caught during the season bouncing down the scale at 1 lb. could almost be counted on one's fingers. Query: Is the canal netted? Mr. Hopper does not say it is, but where are the big roach which in the ordinary course of things should abound there? Are there too many fish and too little food for them? Some suggest that the steam sloop kills the larger fish, but if this were so they would be seen dead at the top of the water. Mr. Hopper had a splendid (?) day lately on the canal at Austen Fen: he sat for four long mortal hours and caught 17 fish which weighed 1 lb. 5 oz., and, wonderful to relate, the catch was sufficient to capture for Mr. Hopper the second prize in the match for the Constitutional Angling Club's prizes. Mr. Rara Avis (a well-known local angler) won the first prize with 2 lbs. 10 oz., and Twynkles (famous on the Bowling Green) the third with 1 lb. 4 oz. Ah! Twynkles, Mr. Hopper beat thee by *one ounce*, and thou wast an outside man, as also was Mr. Rara Avis—and this gives a double chance. In addition to catching 17 small fish, Mr. Hopper also caught a severe cold, as did others who went that day for the filthy lucre.

And now, in view of a certain well-known Town Councillor being returned at the top of the poll at the forthcoming municipal election for the North-east Ward, let Mr. Hopper remind him there is a strong angling club in that ward, the members of which would feel highly delighted at any recognition he might bestow upon them in the shape of a goodly match cup for competition next year. No idea of bribery or corruption enters Mr. Hopper's thoughts in making this suggestion, but he thinks it as well to add that Mr. Slatter, tobacconist, Freeman-street, is the secretary of the club in question.

1896.

XXIV.—A TRAVELLING COMPANION—SAD DEATH OF
FRIEND BROWN.

“DUMPS, Mr. Hopper?” “Well, ratherly; so would you.” “What’s up, old man?” “Well, the long and short of it is, that last night, just as the shades of evening were falling, Mr. Hopper had a long and laborious pull of half an hour against stream to bait a barbel swim, and having made numerous “scratching” puddings, which he duly deposited with loving care and feelings of enthusiastic anticipation in the aforesaid swim, and Mr. Hopper sallying forth at six this evening after Jupiter Pluvius had kept him a prisoner indoors from noon, discovers the boat on the far side of the Trent. The downfall of rain had not affected the height or colour of the river, and Mr. Hopper knows that if only he could get to the swim the barbel are there and breaking their necks to rush for the first savoury morsel that goes so gently down the swim, and all too unsuspecting of what that luscious morsel would conceal—and then you enquire “Dumps, Mr. Hopper?” Blow the local gas works, as represented by the paraffin lamps. The village hostelry has run out of oil, and the reason for the boat being on the wrong side of the river is that the small boy has gone to Clifton village, over the “watter” to get some oil, but if the weather and water are right to-morrow morning Mr. Hopper will have his revenge and give ’em beans, unless, indeed, the barbel have feasted themselves sick and sorry on last night’s baiting.

Well, its no use grunting a dissatisfied grunt, so pocket your disappointment Mr. Hopper, and tell your angling readers what sport you have had on the old river so far as your this year’s visit has run out. Well, carp bream won’t look at anything you offer them. Their haunts are a mass of weeds which swarm with fresh-water shrimps and other food for them, and whatever you offer them they simply lash their tails at in disgust and will have none of it. The river wants a

"fresh" of storm water to come tearing down and clear away all the weed and rubbish in the bed of the river, and then—why then one might catch a hundredweight or two of the leather flappers in an outing of a few hours, and sure enough September is the month for bream fishing. Well, putting carp bream aside, what about barbel, Mr. Hopper? For a week all went well—fair sport. One swim yielded one or more every night, and then all went wrong. Mr. Hopper's swim was only seven feet deep, and was not a *home* for barbel, whereas 350 yards above was a swim 14 feet deep, which *was* a home for them. Mr. Hopper had therefore to draw his "congregation" from the deep swim, but when some wily Nottingham anglers began to bait the deep swim Mr. Hopper's swim yielded no more, because the fish finding their repast ready at their noses did not need to go roaming at night in search of food to fill their stomachs.

Why did not Mr. Hopper bait the deep swim? Well, he didn't for many reasons. He likes to try new ground, and if the venture succeeds, well, Mr. Hopper takes to himself a little credit for finding out a new swim. But was the seven feet swim a success? Rather! the first night Mr. Hopper tickled the palates of ten barbel, and some of them "whoppers," but he was a bit clumsy and out of form that evening, and ought to have landed four more than he actually did. One too curious chub first fell a victim by too earnest an investigation of that piece of white flakey matter floating down the swim, just touching now and again the bottom—he weighed $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb., and then the barbel commenced, and no more chub. Mr. Hopper had not taken his landing net, so he had to play each fish out and land it with his hand at the side of the boat.

Two nights after Helterton rode over from Grimsby on his bicycle—at least he said he did, but there is a railway line to Lincoln, nine miles from Marnham), and joining Mr. Hopper in the boat soon caught his first barbel, which, though weighing only $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., gave plenty of play. Shortly afterwards Helterton was into a regular banger, but somehow Mr. Barbel got loose and detached himself. After Helterton's departure the weather

got unsettled and rainy, and barbel like a low, clear water. Mr. Hopper, too, had to leave his Trent-side resort on two occasions for two days each time, and this prevented him from keeping the swims properly baited, and the fish got dispersed, so Mr. Hopper for several days indulged in light fishing and landed a lot of dace and very fine gudgeon. The latter were splendid specimens, each fish being half-a-dozen times the size of the Benniworth gudgeon. The first evening's fishing this visit brought four chub from 2lbs. to 2½lbs. each to his creel. Wasp grub the bait, and rod of five pieces weighing only 7½ ounces, and each fish was landed by hand at side of boat. Master Hopper, after an absence of five years, has again visited Trent-side, but he is not an enthusiast in the matter of angling.

Mr. Hopper tells no tales and asks no questions, but—well, there are a lot of pretty girls about, and Mr. Hopper wishes he were young once more. The young chaps get all the smiles from the river banks nowadays. Blow getting old says Mr. Hopper, who heard a tale about getting old—a very funny tale indeed—but much too racy to communicate in these notes. It was quite original, and Charlie Cobb the garthman was responsible for it—poor old Charlie—he's 68 he says, and is still good at most things. Not everything he says, but he can ferry the boat across the river or shift the manure out of the crew-yard against any man. Charlie is fond of his pint, but as "lifting the elbow" goes in these parts he is very abstemious, seven or eight a day not more.

Talking about pints, the day Mr. Hopper arrived at Trent-side the usual 10 thirty-sixes were in course of delivery, the drayman being a massive looking man but quiet in speech. With him Hopper junior opens conversation. "They tell me a lot of fellows about here can put away a lot of beer in a day." "Well, yes! but they work hard and it don't hurt them if it's good stuff." "What can you do?" was the next enquiry of young Mr. Hopper. "Well, zur, I did my seven pints afore breakkust, and I allus does my 20 pints a day, never more and never less." "But!" chimes in Mr. Hopper, "surely you have a

head on you the next morning?" "Never," Mr. Drayman replies, "my 'eds allus clear and never aches." And all that Mr. Hopper has to say is that Mr. Drayman looked a magnificent specimen of an Englishman. But this record was broken on Mr. Hopper's return from Grimsby last Tuesday. A man of about 60 with Herculean shoulders entered the carriage at Brocklesby station, and had already had more than one pint. He had come from Hull, and admitted to 15 pints before leaving that sea port. Questioned further by Mr. Hopper respecting his "capacity" he said he could do 26 pints a day well when working hard. Mr. Hopper asked him whether the first or twenty-sixth was freshest to his taste. He replied, "it was hard to tell, there was so little difference, but probably the first had it by a bit. There was, however, scarcely any difference in any of the twenty-six." Mr. Hopper thinks this man would die if Local Option came into his district.

This is not exactly angling talk, but Mr. Hopper feels that the readers of his notes will excuse him for giving the few "beery" experiences which have come under his notice this Trent-side visit. Before closing with the subject, however, Mr. Hopper cannot refrain from giving from a popular London paper the following extract:—Orator: "It's in the wonnerful insight inter human nature that Dickens gets'h the pull over Thackeray; but, on t'other hand, it's the brilliant shafts o' humor, t'gether with a gen'r'l flow of satire, that Thackins get'sh the pull over Dickery. It'sh jush thish—Thickery is the humorist, and Dackins is th' satirist, But, after all, it'sh 'bsurd to instoot any comparison between Dackery an' Thickens." How many pints Mr. Orator had imbibed is unknown to Mr. Hopper.

Before finishing this number of his notes Mr. Hopper has to place on record therein the loss of yet one more of his angling companions. Friend Brown, as he has been known in these notes, is no more. A few weeks ago he met with a violent death on the railway about three miles away, a Great Northern engine running over him whilst on the line and

killing him instantaneously. He was just upon 62 years of age and was an ardent Trent angler, known to every sloopman, packet man, and bank horse-man between Gainsborough and Newark. Well, he is gone. Many and many a time has he walked over from Normanton, two miles away, by half-past three and four o'clock in the morning and routed out Mr. Hopper from his feathery bed for an early morning's bream fishing at Dunham. What few wrinkles Mr. Hopper is in possession of in regard to Trent angling he is mostly indebted to Friend Brown. He was a good violin player, but was a dreadful Radical. Politics, however, do not makes enemies of fellow anglers. Poor old Brown! Helterton, Bowlinggreen Twynkles, and others mentioned in these notes knew him well. He leaves a widow and four children to mourn his loss.

1896.

XXV.—ALL ABOUT MARNHAM FEAST, AND PAUDEEN
O'RAFFERTY.

TO-DAY (12th September) is Marnham feast and fair. Mr. Hopper has never been at the revelry previously.

In days long gone by it was principally a gathering for farmers and cattle dealers to dispose of their foals and young beasts, but with the extension of the system of railways throughout the land it has fallen from its former high estate and reputation and is now more of a feast than a fair; but still 28 mares and foals were brought into the yard of the ancient hostelry where Mr. Hopper's flag is flying, and a fairly brisk trade took place. There is no Maypole—that is a thing of the past. The village damsel of half-a-century ago does not nowadays disport herself in that fashion but affects the modern day craze of the “bike,” and wears her high-heeled shoe, and the puff sleeves of the blouse, and is altogether a different maiden from the young spinster of the good old days gone by. Her nose is tilted in the air in a contemptuous manner and with a supercilious sneer, and the country bumpkin has to mind his P's and Q's in making his advances to the fair one he fain would captivate.

This has been a day and a half for Mr. Hopper. His most recent experience has been the dancing on the brick floor in the brewhouse. The band, represented by the accordion player seated on high on the lid over the copper, is playing the most marvellous polka tune that ever assailed Mr. Hopper's ears. Broth is promised for to-morrow's dinner—a special brew. Mr. Hopper has inspected that copper lid and finds it weak and otherwise faulty, and if perchance that lid gives way, the probability is that having regard to the elevated condition of the company, the broth would have a musical flavour about it, for who would pull Mr. Musician out of the copper (unless Mr. Hopper volunteered his aid) is a matter of very considerable doubt. Mr. Musician is a bit of a ventriloquist, and

there being no programme of the dances, he, at the end of each dance, consults the gods in a low sepulchral voice, who, or one of them, responds in a minor key down the copper chimney that it is to be a polka, the music to be interspersed with whistling representing a canary attending to her young brood. The whistling is certainly loud and shrill, but Mr. Hopper was unable to detect either the note of the yellow songster or the grateful responses of the unfledged ones. In these matters very much must necessarily be left to the imagination.

The attention of Mr. Hopper was then directed to the efforts of a bucolic individual (who had unquestionably helped materially to lower the level of the 36 cask), to light a twopenny cigar with which he had been presented. This performance was unique and well worth seeing. To begin with the old gent put about two-thirds of the cigar in his mouth, so as to get a good hold, but his efforts to get the lighted match near the end were quite futile, and for a long time there was more fear of contact of the flame with his nose than with his cigar. Eventually, after expending nearly a gross of matches, the fire was lighted, and Mr. Joskin negotiated a puff which closely resembled a chimney on fire. How he will get home to Normanton, a village two miles from Marnham, is a problem Mr. Hopper cannot even attempt to solve, but he has offered his haddock line 80 yards long (used by Mr. Hopper as a hauling line) to a fellow villager of the old gent to aid in towing him home safely to his rural abode. The dinner was a sumptuous affair. Round the festive board were gathered three bobbies in blue, the carpenters, the assistant ferryman, two country joskins, several fair ones, a yeoman or two, a better class farmer or two, and the accordion player. Mr. Hopper carved. He forbears alluding to the gastronomic ability and the wonderful capacity of those round the loaded table, but there was enough for all and to spare.

During the evening songs and recitations were given, and Mr. Hopper was requisitioned to give "Paudeen o' Rafferty's say voyage," which Mr. Hopper gave in his best Irish. The history of Paudeen is that he lived in his own cellar on the coal quay in Dublin, and he went to England on a bit of an agri-

cultural speculation—hay-makin' and harvist-rapin. Having realised a fortune of 30s. Paudeen determines to go back to Ireland, buy it out and make himself "imperor" of it. Paudeen gets down to Bristol, and there falls in, worse luck, with an ould countryman of his, and tells him he wants a ship for Ireland, and having adjourned to the "Blind Cow" they wor like two sons of an Irish King in less than a minute. They got discoorsing of Dublin and Naples and other furren parts, and how like the Bay of Naples was to the Bay of Dublin; an' mixin' Naples an' wather and Dublin an' whisky, and wather an' Dublin and Naples an' whisky, Dublin an' Naples, Naples an' Dublin, and when Paudeen was in the middle of his glory in walks the captain of the ship. "Any one here to go aboard," says he. "Here, I am," says Paudeen. Well, they brought Paudeen aboard the ship as dhrunk as a lord, and threw him down in the cellar—the hould they called it, and the divils own hould it was—wid sacks, pigs, praties, and other passengers, an' there they left Paudeen in lavendher, like Paddy Ward's pig. Paudeen was asleep the first week, and on awaking a voice sings out

"There's the Bay!"

That's enough for Paudeen, who scrambles upstairs till he gets on the roof, the deck they call it, as fast as his legs would carry him.

"Land, ho!" says one of the chaps.

"Where?" says Paudeen.

"There it is," says he.

"For the love of glory, show me where," says Paudeen.

"There, over the cat's-head," says he.

Paudeen looked around, but the niver the cat's-head or dog's-tail aither could Paudeen see! But he gev another look, and there was the Bay, sure enough, afore him.

"Arrah, good luck to you!" says Paudeen, "but you warm the cockles of me heart. But what's come over the Hill of Howth," says Paudeen. "It used to be a civil, paiceable soort of a mountain, but now it's splutthering an' smokin away like a

grate big limekiln. Shure the boys must have lit a big bonfire on top of it to welcome me."

"Hill of Howth?" says a sailor chap, "you're a Grecian, that's not the Hill of Howth."

"Not the Hill of Howth?" says Paudeen.

"No," says he, "That's Mount Vesuvius."

"Aisy, aisy," says Paudeen, "Isn't Mount Vesulpherous in Italy?"

"Yis," says he.

"An' isn't Italy in France?" says Paudeen.

"Of coorse," says he.

"An' isn't France in Gibberalther?" says Paudeen.

"To be sure," says he.

"An' isn't Gibberalther in Roossia?" say Paudeen.

"May be so," says he. "But we're in Italy, anyhow. This is the Bay of Naples, and that is Mount Vesuvius."

"Are you sure?" says Paudeen.

"I am" says he.

"And says Paudeen "Be me sowl it was thrue for him. *The ship made a big blundher* in takin' me to Naples, whin I wanted to go to Dublin, d'ye mind."

And so ended "Paudeen o' Rafferty's say voyage." It is now half-past nine p.m. and the fun is fast and furious, so with these few discursive notes about Marnham feast Mr. Hopper will leave to the imagination of his readers the remaining scenes up to closing time.

Since Mr. Hopper wrote his last notes the weather has been most unsettled, thunderstorms, and heavy rains prevailing, and storm water has been tearing down the river in such a manner as to disperse all the larger species of fish from their usual haunts. On Monday last, however, the river was fairly clear of floating weed, and Mr. Hopper pottered about baiting a swim or two in readiness for Tuesday evening's fishing. He then put together his rod just on the off chance of finding a roaming chub, and in this he was successful, as he soon had in the boat one of 2½lbs. Very few minutes remained before the mantle of night was cast over the river,

and Mr. Hopper pulled up the stone, and after quarter of an hour's rowing was down at the Ferry, and having made the boat secure, he was soon within the walls of the Brownlow Arms. On Friday afternoon the river was in better condition, and was fining down nicely but was not as low and clear as Mr. Hopper likes it for barbel fishing. He pulled up to his firstly baited swim and soon had his float nicely on its journey. About 20 yards down it went with a sudden yuck, and Mr. Hopper was fast into what proved to be a chub of 2½lbs. This gentleman was in splendid condition. The third swim down the float acted in a somewhat suspicious manner, seeming to move sideways. Mr. Hopper gave a turn of his wrist, and this time it was a barbel of just upon 3 lbs., which fought very strongly and bravely. Then quickly followed two chub of 1½lbs. and 1 lb.

Mr. Hopper then thought he would give the swim a rest, and try the other swim he had baited higher up the river, and which had yielded the 2½lbs. chub the previous night, but the journey was a fruitless one as the swim proved barren. Mr. Hopper therefore made tracks for the swim he had already tried with the good results above stated, and the second time of floating it down went the float in a most unmistakable manner and a barbel of between 3 and 4lbs. was shortly taken from his watery element. Then followed another barbel of about the same weight, then a short interval of quiet, and then to wind up the evening's sport a chub of 2½lbs. showed too enquiring a disposition and joined the other denizens of the deep Mr. Hopper had ruthlessly taken from their watery home. These seven fish weighed 17lbs. and Mr. Hopper was well satisfied with the result of his previous evening's baiting. Wednesday was wet and the river rose again and had colour in it and fishing was useless. Thursday was a fine day and Mr. Hopper landed two barbel—largest 4½lbs.—and a lot of dace. Whilst light fishing with the finest possible tackle for dace a barbel appropriated the "gentle" bait and made off 25 yards down the river, and after holding him for a little time he made an unexpected bolt and smashed the very fine line as if it had been

cotton. Mr. Hopper was only fishing with a roach hook, so his chances of ultimately landing the barbel were not very rosy. Friday and Saturday were wet days; the river was high and but very little fishing was possible, and Mr Hopper restricted himself to dace fishing.

 XXVI.—ABOUT "MR. DAILY PINT"; ALSO "UNDER-BROOK'S 25LBS. CARP."

“**M**R. Daily Pint” was an institution, an every day one, at the “Brownlow Arms,” on the banks of the Trent. He was also, or at any rate laid himself out to be, a “horsebreaker.” Something in the amateur way, you know; but the fiery untamed steed on the back of which he usually put in an appearance was “mostlings the same old ’oss.” He became so regular in appearing at the hostelry that he was properly and popularly christened “Mr. Daily Pint.” His other and real name was—well, we will hide it under the umbrageous shade of the aspen poplars which rustle their leaves day and night on the green expanse stretching away in front of the “Arms” up to the river bank. He was a *haw haw* kind of swell; you know the kind of chap, gentle angler. But for all that he was not above his beer, which he was not only a good hand at but seemed to enjoy. It must not be supposed that he limited himself in the course of the day to the solitary pint his name suggests. Oh! no; horsebreaking, particularly if it is the same old ’oss, is real hard work, and the sagacious quadruped seemed to divine by instinct when the thirsty proclivities of its rider were “at flood,” and thereupon invariably made tracks for the “Arms.” “Mr. Daily Pint” would saunter in his own inimitable free and easy—not to call it “confoundedly cheeky”—manner into the private sitting room of the “Arms,” and would request any fair visitor to play him a “chune” or sing him a song. Many a rebuff “Mr. Daily Pint” received in answer to his solicitation, but he was case hardened—he did not know when he was snubbed. But the daily pint or pints have removed him with his fiery steed to regions remote from Trent side. He and his Pegasus may by now be in the unknown land, but as the result of Mr. Hopper’s enquiries about him this year’s visit, the probability points to his having increased or multiplied the daily pint to such an

extent that it was deemed prudent to put a certain amount of restraint on his movements, with a view to his liver having an opportunity of recovering as far as possible its originally normal condition.

Mr. Hopper will now dismiss Mr. Daily Pint from his notes and pass on to topics and incidents which are probably more to the taste of Grimsby anglers. Did any of the latter read about two months ago in the columns of the *Sportsman* of that wonderful struggle of five and a half hour's duration of Mr. Underbrook with a mighty carp of the estimated weight of 25 pounds? The *locus in quo* was Croxby Pond. It is well known that big carp are the most shy and suspicious fish that swim in the lakes and ponds of England. Mr. Underbrook's experience was a peculiar one, and, no doubt, he now feels that he can honestly say

"Of all the fish that swim the watery mead,
Not one in cunning can the carp exceed."

Mr. Underbrook is a cute and determined angler of the most persistent and dogged sort. He knows full well from his previous experience in carp fishing that coarse tackle is useless in angling for so wary a gentleman as the *Cyprinus Carpio*. No! Mr. Underbrook is a knowing card, and he bears in mind the following lines:—

The carp whose wary eye,
Admits no vulgar tackle nigh,
Essay your art's supreme address,
And beat the fox in sheer finesse.

Mr. Underbrook has a large stock of patience, as the readers of these notes will admit, when they learn that for five and a half hours he used every artifice he could think of to land the twenty-five pounder, even going into the mud (and there is *some* mud in Croxby Pond) up to his waist, but all to no purpose, for Mr. Carp eventually, after this abnormally long struggle, managed to get the gut trace across his huge back fin and severed it in two. Truly might Mr. Underbrook ejaculate in his own righteous way, and say that the title of the "Water Fox" was well earned by this cunning and sagacious species of fish. Mr. Hopper offers his piscatorial condolence to Mr. Underbrook for the loss of this grand fish after so lengthy a

struggle. The slow growth-rate of the carp is marvellous. Carp of 6lbs. weight have been known to be fifty years old, and experienced keepers are of opinion that the growth-rate of carp does not in some cases average more than an ounce a year. But even allowing a growth-rate of about four ounces a year Mr. Underbrook's carp (if his estimate of its weight was a fairly accurate one) would be about 130 years old. Mr. Underbrook has not yet attained that patriarchal age so it is not surprising he was out-manœuvred by the "Water Fox." During the last fortnight of Mr. Hopper's visit to the Trent the weather was for the most part rainy and boisterous, and as barbel and bream in consequence dispersed from their usual haunts Mr. Hopper had to recognise the truth of the old saying that "little fish are sweet," and lay himself out principally for dace fishing, but even they were difficult to find. One day when the water was in fair condition Mr. Hopper and a fellow angler out of one swim landed about four score dace and gudgeon, the latter being in the proportion of about two to five dace captured. The dace gives good sport for his size, and is very rapid in his movements.

"Oft swiftly as he swims his silver belly shows,
But with such nimble flight, that ere ye can disclose
His shape, out of your sight like lightning he is shot."

Mr. Hopper must now bid adieu to his angling friends, anyhow for the 1896 season.

1897.

XXVII.—MCNAB AND HIS SUNDAY DEVOTIONS; ALSO
ABOUT MAZAWATTEE AND MR. HOPPER JUNIOR.

MCNAB, of that ilk, was a Welshman, his father, an out and out Mac, being Scotch to the backbone (and very much of that), and his maternal ancestor being of Welsh extraction, hence the name of McNab. Mazawattee Cerulean Stone was a Grimbarian—he was a funny stone was Mazawattee—he had rolled about pretty considerable, and a good deal of moss had adhered to his outer framework. McNab's other name was George—a much more sensible christian name than "Mazawattee Cerulean," which had been bestowed upon the other fellow. McNab fished all the work days of the week when he did not work, but Sunday was sacred from that pursuit—good man is George, at least sometimes—he is a devout worshipper on Sunday, and on that sacred evening (not very often it must be confessed did morning service claim his devotions—but then don't you see he had been fishing late on Saturday, and that makes all the difference), he is to be seen with prayer and hymn book under his arm wending his way to his Sabbath devotions with a view to assisting the choir with their melodious strains. Now McNab was a bit run down, and Mazawattee wanted a change, so it was arranged they should accompany Mr. Hopper to Trentside this year of grace 1897. Of course the usual "pluggers" were expected.

The new East and West Railway having been opened in December last it was decided to make the journey by that route, and accordingly on a Monday not very long past, Mr. Hopper and his angling mates presented themselves at Grimsby Town station with their respective luggages and angling impedimenta, which latter were not a few, for George and Mazawattee are very thorough in all they do. George is an obliging chap so took his bicycle with him in case of running short of bait, in which event he would utilise his "bike" to run

over to the bone-mill to procure a fresh supply of those beautiful crawlers on which Sheffield anglers bestow so much care and attention, and keep so warm and clean in a manner which is scarcely acceptable to Grimsby anglers. The weather was very hot, but the journey was a pleasant one, all being full of anticipation of good sport. The destination was arrived at in due course, and a good dinner put out of sight—by the bye, Master Hopper, who is sufficiently advanced in years to be now styled Mr. Hopper, junr., accompanied us, not with the view so much of angling as of satisfying himself and the world generally that the young ladies of the district had given themselves up to the feminine craze of cycling, and also that since last year's visit they had advanced in that moral culture and ladylike tone and address which one looks for in the coy village maiden of to-day. Mr. Hopper says nothing against George, but owing to the attractions of the fair sex on the other side of the river, it was considered prudent that his fishing should be confined to that side of the Trent where Mr. Hopper and his mates could keep an eye upon him.

It was determined to spend the afternoon in pulling the boat up to the swim where Mr. Hopper last year landed so many barbel, and after executing sundry repairs to the boat, this intention was carried into effect, and a good ground baiting of "scratching" was given the swim, and then rods were put together with a view to trying for a few dace and gudgeon before tea time arrived. These fish, however, were dead "off," and Mr. Hopper and his mates had to sit out a drenching shower, and listen to the music of somewhat distant thunder. There was not sufficient rain to freshen up the Trent or cause a rise of water, but it cooled the air, and made things pleasanter all round. In the evening the Ferry swim was fished, and Mr. Hopper quite expected it would yield some good chub like last year, where Mr. Hopper in twenty minutes had inside the boat four chub ranging from 2lbs. to 2½lbs. each. The swim had been baited with cheese, but all lures were used without avail, and with very little to show as the result of persistent and careful fishing, the hostelry was sought

with faces somewhat longer than they were in the morning. Mr. Hopper could not put forward any more plausible excuse for the failure to catch some "pluggers" than that the river was very low and clear, and that the 1897 season was generally in most quarters a late one with fish, and in addition to that the visit to Trentside this year was about three weeks in advance of the period at which he made his annual visit last year. However, all were hopeful for the morrow, as it was intended to fish the bream swim, where some years ago Mr. Hopper, with his own rod, landed 20 carp bream in three-and-a-half hours, weighing 50lbs. In the same time poor old Witchdorter and Brown (both now gone to their rest) caught 40lbs., so that the boat bottom was pretty well filled with 90lbs. weight of fish on arrival at the Ferry. Mr. Hopper, junr., was somewhat mirthful at the expense of Mr. Hopper's dignity at the lack of sport, and wound up the day when George and Mazawattee were lighting their candles preparatory to seeking their virtuous couches by saying, "Oh! yes; you'll catch fish to-morrow, no doubt about it, we always catch plenty of fish here, at least sometimes." This last word made George and Mazawattee look somewhat querulous, but Mr. Hopper put on a confident air as to the morrow's results, and so temporarily allayed their angling fears.

XXVIII.—MCNAB'S FIRST BARBEL; HOW HE PLAYED IT.

Q UITE undismayed by the sarcastic remark of Mr. Hopper, junr., that *sometimes* fish were caught on the Trent the paternal ancestor of that young man sallied forth with his angling mates on Tuesday morning quite eager for trying conclusions with the big bream known to frequent the swim alluded to in the last notes. A splendid assortment of worms, obtained from Stephen Dale, of St. John-street, Nottingham [there's a cheap advertisement for you Stephen Dale] was placed in a capacious bag, and McNab having expressed his readiness to do a bit of hauling, the boat was soon speeding its way up the river. The water was very shallow inshore and McNab having exerted his muscles a little too vigorously the boat grounded. McNab was furious and yelled out from the bank, "I thought, Mr. Hopper, you said you knew every inch of the river." However, the delay was not of long duration, and having backed a little downstream the boat was soon on its way again with plenty of water under its keel. Mazawattee, impassive as is his wont, reclined in an easy posture in the boat whilst McNab and Mr. Hopper did the work. Before long the bream swim was reached, the boat placed in a favourable position and the stone let down, and rods were quickly put together and the swim carefully fished down by McNab and Mazawattee, whilst Mr. Hopper selected a few score of the primest worms and consigned them to the depths below with the object of "bringing on" the bream and causing them to bite. McNab employed all his well-known artful tricks to induce a bite and Mazawattee was in no way behind him in the ruses he employed, but not a bite could be got. It was clear the bream were dead off (anyhow in this portion of the river) and after a prolonged but ineffectual trial of the swim it was decided to pull up the stone and try for smaller fry somewhat lower down the river. This proved almost as disappointing as the bream swim, and McNab and

Mazawattee began to look as if the catching fish *sometimes* was about true after all. It was a sore trial to Mr. Hopper that his pet fishing ground should let him down in this way, and he stuck up for the old river in every possible way he could think of, but it was clear that his mates began to be a bit dubious.

Well, the long and short of it was that with the exception of a very few small dace, roach, and chub, the morning and afternoon's fishing proved a failure, but it must be borne in mind the heat was intense and there was some little excuse if the fish felt too languid to nibble. Of course the principal dish Mr. Hopper had to offer was the barbel swim, to be fished after tea in the cool of the evening, but he was not very sanguine about it yielding fish in view of its only having been baited the previous afternoon,—and yield it did not. Mr. Hopper put as good a face on it as possible, but it was pretty clear McNab and Mazawattee were getting desperate, and were on the point of comparing Fulstow Drain End and Austen Fen or Firebeacon with the Trent—and very much to the disparagement of the latter river. However they were good enough temporarily to postpone so invidious a comparison. The next morning all were up with the magpies—these are much more numerous at Trent-side than larks—and the boat was taken down to Dunham with the luck of finding the best swim in the “Dubbs,” already occupied by Billyboy and a friend who were catching a few carp bream, but nothing above 3lbs. or so. Billyboy, like the generous fisherman he is, had no objection to the ferry boat being brought alongside his own, and this was accordingly done, but beyond some eels and some other small fry there was no sport. Even Billyboy's and his friend's bites soon ceased, and it was clear the bream were not properly on. It should be mentioned that there was a few inches rise of water this day which Mr. Hopper could not just then understand, as the mill water is due down the river on Tuesday, and this was Wednesday. However, Mr. Hopper put on his thinking cap and that brought to his dulled senses the fact that the previous Monday was Bank Holiday, and of course the merry millers had not worked that day and con-

sequently the water was a day late coming down the river. Of course the extra push of water down the river caused by the mill water put the baited barbel swim out of court entirely, but nevertheless it was fished—however, with no result. The Siamese twins never looked blacker than McNab and Mazawattee did that Wednesday evening, and it was only Mr. Hopper's cheerfulness and very apparent faith in the old river which prevented an explosion. However, they were both very good, and also it was tolerably clear they were well nigh disgusted, and Mr. Hopper was in fear lest McNab should seek consolation in some way or other over the river. It was certainly getting late in the evening for serenading the fair ones who were known to be in the snug little village over the water, but McNab's next best pursuit after fishing is making himself agreeable to the ladies. He is a dab hand at this, and knowing this particular frailty on his part, it was sought to prevent any outbreak in that direction, and with Mazawattee's assistance he was beguiled home instead of giving forth melodious strains for the benefit of such of the Clifton damsels who had not yet sought their dainty couches.

On Thursday morning McNab and Mazawattee turned out between 4 and 5 o'clock to take the boat to Dunham Dubbs and fish the bream swim there, but Mr. Hopper remained under the protecting awning of his four-poster until 7 o'clock, when he slipped into his usual matutinal cold tub, and having breakfasted, jogged with his roach rod to the length of water (about 7 feet deep) above the Staithe, and having made himself as comfortable as the conditions of a very sloping bank permitted he commenced warfare against the finny tribe, which on this particular morning were in a very good humour, as when Mr. Hopper made tracks at the dinner hour he had a real good basket of dace, white bream, and roach. Of the latter some very fair samples, the largest about $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. The other two chaps had returned from their Dunham outing and had caught 5 or 6 bream, the largest about $3\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., but all their sport was in the first 20 minutes or half-hour, after which the fish had quite knocked off biting. In the evening, Mr. Hopper sought

his morning's swim whilst the other chaps went down river to the willows, and fished for chub, but fortune not smiling very broadly upon them they sought fresh ground and lighted upon a nice roach swim on the other side of the river, and although it was then 8 o'clock a nice little lot of roach were landed sufficient to induce a visit to the newly-found swim next morning. On Friday the two early birds (Mr. Hopper is not up with the magpies and proverbial lark as he used to be in years gone by) were on the barbel swim between 5 and 6 notwithstanding a dense white mist which hung over the river, but ne'er a barbel had they touched by breakfast time, although they had seen several "pick" in the swim. This determined Mr. Hopper where he would locate himself that Friday evening, of which more hereafter. During the day, under a hot burning sun, fishing was carried on under somewhat trying conditions, but "here there and everywhere" including the new roach swim of the previous evening, found the three men in the boat, but all to little purpose. Certainly a few small roach, a few white bream, a fair quantity of dace and one gudgeon responded to the invitations constantly presented to them, but there was not sufficient sport to keep the pot boiling, as the saying goes.

In the evening McNab and Mazawattee took the boat to fish near the willows, notwithstanding Mr. Hopper's assurance that it was a real barbel evening. Their morning trial of the barbel swim, however, had shaken any feeling of confidence they might at one time have felt respecting the swim yielding barbel, so they put Mr. Hopper across the river to fish from the bank, whilst they went down the river to the willows. Mr. Hopper started floating the swim, but as it had to be fished about 15 or 20 yards from the bank it made it rather hard work, so the float was unshipped and a ledger lead put on. Ten minutes or so after throwing out there was an unmistakable barbel bite, and Mr. Hopper either struck too soon or too late—anyhow not at the right time—and Mr. Barbel went on his way rejoicing. In five minutes, however, a real tug came, to which Mr. Hopper nothing loth quickly responded, and this

time he had hold. A few minutes' nice play brought a barbel just over 3lbs. to the bank side, and having no landing net it was assisted out of its native element with a firm grip just above its skull. The dace and small chub now began to be very troublesome, "whittling" at the edge of the bait, but presently something bigger laid hold, and after 10 minutes strong play Mr. Hopper had a beauty of 4lbs. on the bank. A little later Mr. Hopper had, as he thought, hold again, but he was just too late in striking, and Mr. Barbel blew the bait out of his mouth before the hook could be struck home. It was now getting dark so Mr. Hopper put together his rod and made tracks home, where he found his two mates had had very poor sport—a few small chub and dace—but they admired the barbel, and were pleased that the swim had at last yielded something worthy of its reputation. However, it was clear they were about tired of their lack of sport—not to be wondered at either—and they announced their intention of returning Grimsbywards next day, whilst Mr. Hopper being out for a holiday as well as for fishing, said he should stick to his guns—or rather his rods—for another week.

Mr. Hopper had almost forgotten to record the most important event of the week. On either Wednesday or Thursday the fence end barbel swim yielded McNab a nice little barbel between 2lbs. and 3lbs. weight, and for his size he gave McNab any amount of play, and it was the best part of 10 minutes before he was safely in the boat. McNab did fairly well under the circumstances of its being his first barbel, but he has a lot to learn in the way of experience before he can properly handle a 5lb. barbel. Mazawattee looked grimly on in stolid silence whilst McNab's rod made involuntary plunges of two feet deep into the water under the strong fighting tactics and strain of the barbel, but everyone's *first* barbel makes the angler's rod dip. Your health McNab, over your first barbel!

1897.

XXIX.—RATHER POETICAL.

ACCORDING to their previously announced intentions McNab and Mazawattee took their departure on Saturday afternoon amidst the regretful tears of Polly and other tender-hearted damsels. Mazawattee must be acquitted of being in any way the cause of this display of the tender but briny emotions, so the less said about McNab the better. It is a wonder those two old practised anglers had not wept at their lack of sport during the week, but even Mr. Hopper can't make fish bite if they won't. As his mates had taken their departure in silent disgust Mr. Hopper was thrown on his own resources, so, as barbel and bream seemed to be dead off, he thought that roach might be more kindly disposed. He was not, however, very sanguine, as the heat had been very intense all through the week. Sunday being the next day Mr. Hopper had plenty of time for quiet thought and planning out his fishing arrangements, subject of course to any vagaries the weather might feel disposed to show, and, sure enough, the change came at noon on that day of rest in the shape of torrents of rain which descended without intermission until nearly six in the evening, then it cleared up just in time for Mr. Hopper to go to church and hear the Fledboro' parson preach, the latter taking duty during the three weeks' absence of the village parson. Mr. Hopper jun. had ridden home in the morning with the view of going on the morrow to Louth sports, whence he purposed returning on Tuesday. The river rose several inches in consequence of Sunday's rain, but on Monday the river was in fair fishing condition. Overnight Mr. Hopper had retired in good time, and during his dreams verified the truth of the old lines—

"Sleeping we imagine what awake we wish;
Dogs dream of bones, and fishermen of fish."

If Mr. Hopper's dreams had been realised some veritable pluggers would have been removed from their lurking retreats in the Trent, but dreams don't as a rule come true. However,

on Monday, by way of novelty he tried a nice little swim four feet deep, with a beautiful white grain of creed wheat impaled on his hook. The first swim down yielded a roach which two hours later plumped down the scale at 1lb. Needless to say, Mr. Hopper was in ecstasies, and pictured a lot more and bigger fellows the following swims. But alas! only three more small roach were brought to bank, and the swim belied its first promise. Probably few, if any, Grimsby anglers are acquainted with the following lines, and Mr. Hopper reproduces them here for their benefit—

“Perch, trout, and salmon love clean waters all,
Green weedy roots, and stoney gravell small,
So doth the bullhead, gudgeon, and the loach,
Who most in shallow brooks delight to bee,
The ruffe, the dace, the barbelle and the roch,
Gravell and sand do love in lesse degree,
But to the deep and shade do more approach
And overhead some covert love to see,
Of spreading poplar, oake, or willow green,
Where underneath they lurke for being seen.”

Secrets of Angling, 1652.

On Monday afternoon Mr. Hopper slept the sleep of the righteous on the couch, and in the evening pulled the boat up to the barbel swim, which he “floated” down with great care. As the shades of evening began to draw in an unmistakable barbel appearance hovered over the swim, and Mr. Hopper felt certain he was in for a bit of sport, and sure enough before he put up his rod for the evening he had two nice barbel in the boat—the larger 4lbs.—and both had given nice play. On Tuesday evening the same swim yielded a beautiful 5lb. fish which gave any amount of strong play before he was safe in the meshes of the huge landing net. The next day was windy and although locally there was very little rain, there had evidently been a heavy downpour in the Midlands as the river rapidly rose, and a vast amount of surface weed came down making fishing well nigh impossible. In the course of a day or two when this fresh had just about run off, another and a bigger rise came down with more weed than ever. Under these circumstances the barbel swim was rendered unfishable, as not only would the rise disperse all big fish from their swims, but the surface weed and other rubbish coming down made the

fishing of them impossible. Quiet nooks out of the current had therefore to be sought, and fishing for smaller fry indulged in. This was not altogether a success, although on one or two occasions Mr. Hopper had fairly decent baskets of fish to show, made up principally of dace, white bream, and roach—of the latter a few nice sized ones but nothing over 11lb. Mr. Hopper's 1897 Trent holiday from an angling point of view was a failure—five barbel only, but they weighed between 18lbs. and 19lbs., the three largest totalling just over 13lbs. Better luck next year if Mr. Hopper is spared to make his annual visit to Trent-side. A lot of Nottingham men were down on the far side of the river, but they only secured four barbel, and no carp bream. If Nottingham anglers are not catching fish it is a sure sign that the fish are not "on." And now, Mr. Hopper must bid his angling friends farewell until Trent-side sees him again in 1898. He is sorry not to have had more appetising notes for his angling readers, but to be consistent he feels bound to place on record his failures as well as his successes. He closes his 1897 notes with a few more lines from "Secrets of Angling," published in 1652:—

"Then see on yonder side, where one doth sit,
 With line well twisted, and his hook but small;
 His cork not big, his plumets round and fit,
 His bait of finest paste a little ball,
 Wherewith he doth intice unto the bit,
 The careless *roach*, that soone is caught withall;
 Within a foot the same doth reach the ground,
 And with least touch the float straight sinketh down

"So for the *roach*, more baits he hath beside,
 As of a sheep, the thick congealed bloud,
 Which on a board, he useth to divide
 In portions small, to make them fit and good,
 That better on his hooke they may abide:
 And of the waspe; the white and tender brood,
 And worms, that breed on every herb and tree,
 And sundry flies, that quick and lively bee."

XXX.—ABOUT A CARDIGAN JACKET—HOW ANGLERS'
WIVES GET BLAMED.

“**L**OST, stolen, or *left behind*,” a *Cardigan* jacket. Yes, George McNab, your own veritable chest warmer, which on your solemn word and most trustworthy memory you swore you remembered packing with your own hands into your Gladstone bag when leaving the Trent-side hostelry after a week’s fishing in the old river last August, and yet, on going for a few days’ outing this last January for a bit of winter fishing to the same old spot, sure and behold there’s something hanging on the peg in the bedroom which is dangerously like the *Cardigan* jacket in question, and beyond a bit of mildew, why it *is* the same identical jacket; and your good little housewife George! how she has been hustled and bustled upside and downside the house since August last to find that *Cardigan* jacket. She must have given it away to some wealthy relation, or packed it away in a drawer or a trunk and forgotten all about it. Yes, George, you were quite sure you had brought it away from the Trent; if there was one thing more than another you remembered it was putting it in the Gladstone bag the very first thing you packed. But anyhow, George, now that it *was* actually left behind at Trent-side, it won’t do for your missus (for she *is* missus you know) to know you have found it there, there’ll be ructions if you do, you must dissemble,—this is what you must do——

“Well, Mr. Hopper,” said George McNab, “if you don’t mind I’ve a little plan of my own, I quite agree it would never do for the *Cardigan* jacket to turn up immediately on my return from my winter outing to Trent-side. It would be altogether too suspicious and I should never hear the last of it. She’s a good little woman as you know, but she does like to get on the rough side of me and have the chaff on her side, and I can’t stand that. Now, my plan is this—I mustn’t pack it in my

Gladstone bag for she always unpacks for me (I know I'm a lazy beast in that direction) and she'd find it. No, I must smuggle it home at the bottom of my bass amongst my fishing paraphernalia,—those she never touches you may be sure, and then I'll pop it away unknown to her in some place where she won't come across it just at present—in the spare bed-room between the palliasse and the bed, and she'll turn it up some day and say, "Why George, here's your Cardigan jacket turned up, I haven't the slightest recollection of having put it there, but I suppose I must have done, anyhow, George dear, I'm awfully sorry I ever suggested you left it behind in the summer, but at the time I felt quite confident you had. However it's strange it should be so mildewed round the neck because our room is not a bit damp."—And then Mr. Hopper, I shall have the laugh on my side against the missus unless you split on me, and fishing pals never do that; and for heaven's sake Mr. Hopper don't put it in your fishing notes and send them to the missus to read, it would make things ten times worse." Of course Mr. Hopper wasn't going to split upon his angling mate—so he made up his mind at the time—but resolutions are treacherous things, and Mr. Hopper lay awake one night and thought he could serve up the Cardigan jacket as a nice little tit-bit in his notes, and so he presents it to his angling readers, of course the general public don't know who "George McNab" is, so it don't matter, but Mrs. McNab knows, and Mr. Hopper surmises that when the notes come to Mrs. McNab's hands, and she puts on her best spectacles, it won't be the last that McNab will hear of his Cardigan jacket.

It will be seen from the foregoing notes that McNab and Mr. Hopper have been venturing upon a few days' winter fishing on the Trent. It was an experiment made more for the purpose of comparison with the summer fishing of the river than anything, and although a few fair roach were creeled the visit was a disappointing one from an angling point of view. The river was clear and low, a few inches only above summer level, and it was difficult to get the fish in any number out of

their deep winter holes and swims. The wind was high and boisterous most days and rendered it quite impracticable to fish some of the most likely swims. Roach bit in a half-hearted kind of way and there was a pretty good interval between the bites. The biggest roach was about 1lb. and a few over $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. were got, but for a river like the Trent the yield was disappointing as regards the size of the fish caught. The river was running in splendid order for chub fishing, but, notwithstanding most careful angling with bullocks' pith and brains and also "scratching," not one of that species availed himself of the lure so temptingly displayed—that experienced paste fisherman, friend Sussex, of Kent-street, that dapperlike chap with such a round tub, who never runs away from business for a "drap of the crayture," was most anxious that a big chub should be landed, and he obligingly sent McNab some pith and brains with the following characteristic epistle:—"I have forwarded you some spinal vertebræ; also some substance which you will find contains dura mater, pia mater, tunica arachnoidea, medullary substance, cortical substance, which is in close propinquity to the cerebrum of the cerebellum. All this means 'brains,' of which I have very few, &c., &c." Now would it be credited that the chub would not even give one solitary bite or snag at this wonderful bait, but fish on certain days and in certain weathers won't bite at anything you put before them.

In the swim where the above speciality was tried an angler only a month previously had taken in one day 85lbs of chub, some of them up to 5lbs. each—some of the readers of these notes will exclaim "What a whacker," but it's solid truth. As the river proper did not yield well, a backwater known as the old Trent was tried and the first afternoon about 60 dace were brought to bank, the nine biggest fish being splendid specimens. The next day about 45 had the temerity to try whether they preferred dry land to their native element, and the next afternoon about 30 responded. The pool fished was full of hundreds of the finest dace any angler could wish to see, but the biggest fish were as a rule too wary to be caught. There is no romancing about these big dace, they were to be seen by

scores in the clear shallow water near the shuttle doors, and the water had to be stirred up and muddled some yards above before a fish could be induced to bite, although Charlie Cobb, the garthman, lived on fish during the week McNab and Mr. Hopper were at Trent-side. Still the visit was poor in results and instead of feeding one poor old labourer the whole village of rustics should have been regaled with a fish dinner every day. McNab behaved well, but Mr. Hopper had promised Mrs. McNab he should be kept on the proper side of the river.

Since the summer visit the ferry service has been discontinued. The big wain boat and also the horse boat had got out of repair, and as the landlord of the Inn which has hitherto worked the ferry boats declined to keep them in repair Mr. Ferryman chucked the job and laid up the boats on the river bank. This is a great inconvenience, not only to the inhabitants in the neighbourhood who have "time out of memory" been accustomed to rely upon the ferry for crossing the Trent, but also to farmers and doctors and veterinary surgeons following their respective callings and professions, and also to cyclists. It means going miles out of their way. What the result will be it is difficult to forecast, but either the Trent Navigation Company or the County or District Council will have to take the matter in hand, as where the ferry was plied it is a highway across the river—of course not a ford, being too deep for that, but the highway ran down to the water's edge on either side of the river, the big wain boat being the connecting link between the two roads. It is also inconvenient to the sloopmen who at certain parts of the river have to change their towing path from one bank to the opposite one and the horse boat was used for ferrying the horses across that pull the hauling lines of the sloops. Now the sloops have to provide their own flat bottomed horse boats and get across where and as best they can. But worst of all, Mr. Hopper has lost his stand on the end of the big wain boat, where in days gone by he has slaughtered many a big barbel, the biggest 8lbs.—a 25 minutes' tussle—"Sic transit gloria ferryboati."

What a wonderful winter season this has been ! in fact there has been no winter. In an ordinary season you may, after October has passed, angle for gudgeon until you are blue in the face, but they have bitten well up to the present time. In the middle of November, on the Louth and Tetney canal, McNab and Mr. Hopper, in addition to a splendid catch of roach, landed 45 gudgeon, and as late as Saturday, the 12th February instant, the same anglers landed in the same length of water 42 splendid specimens of that species and 95 roach, the latter being estimated by McNab to pull down the scales at 2½ stones. Both the gudgeon and the roach were in splendid condition. The Louth canal yielded very well in September and October last, Mr. Hopper on one or two occasions landing over 2 stones of roach in the day. The long pond or water below the Outer Fen Lock has, Mr. Hopper is given to understand, yielded a lot of small fish, but only occasionally has the take of roach represented fair sizeable fish. Mr. Hopper's biggest roach this winter season has been 1¼lbs., but the canal just mentioned was not responsible for it.

The fishing resort known as "The Culvert" has not fished well since last 15th June. It is little good fishing the river there before September, and then only after a heavy fall of rain, which brings up the fish from the lower reaches of the river. As every angler knows, rain has been conspicuous by its absence, and as a result the river in question has made a very poor return to anglers who have visited it. There has been an ugly rumour abroad that the river has been netted, and tons of fish taken away to stock Yorkshire streams and reservoirs, but netting could not capture the tens of thousands of roach to be seen in the river last winter. The "Culvert" itself has also fished rather poorly, the roach not running nearly the size they attained last winter ; in fact they have mostly been little pottering beggars.

Hob Hole has been disappointing also, Mr. Hopper understands, and particularly in the matter of bream, except in June and July when the Sheffielders got amongst them, but since then they have disappeared and anglers have been unable to find them the last five months of last year.

Speaking of Hob Hole, the 13 couple of fowl which McNab bought and paid for four years ago, and which he has not yet brought away, have (with the exception of a few odd ones which now and again have been served up as a dinner for the schoolmaster on his angling and other visits there) thrived remarkably well, and when McNab puts in an appearance he is invariably received by an approving and generous chuckle of welcome.

The Park water has improved very much in colour and clearness, due, Mr. Hopper thinks, to the new bore put in last year. The Park Committee ought *now* to purchase from Mr. Ford, of Caistor, 150 or 200 yearly trout and 50 king carp and re-stock the lake. The cost would be under £5. The yearling trout Mr. Hopper and Bobbingmoon put in twelve or thirteen years ago mostly grew to 2lbs. or 3lbs. each, and became so tame from being fed by children at the east end of the lake that they afforded great amusement and entertainment to the frequenters of the Park. Those trout have about died off and the lake should be re-stocked; it is getting quite late enough as breeders' supplies are getting low, and fish are carried better in cold weather. It may be that the Park Committee have just now other channels for the funds at their disposal, but no harm can be done by Mr. Hopper throwing out the suggestion he had made. This is a long yarn and Mr. Hopper is about blown.

APRIL, 1899.

XXXI.—MCNAB GOES TO CHURCH—THE PARSON'S PRETTY
DAUGHTER. JONES'S EXPENSIVE DAY'S ANGLING
WHEN TRESPASSING.

THE legal season for trout angling opened on the 1st February, but in North Lincolnshire it might with advantage be postponed until the 1st April, as the fish, so early in the year, particularly those which run any size, are lank and thin and correspondingly weak and deficient in their well-known fighting qualities. The earliest stream is the Bain, and on Easter Monday last a well-known Grimbarian returned with $6\frac{1}{2}$ brace in his creel, the killing flies having been the "March brown" and "red spinner"—the stretch of water running between the mill and Biscathorpe was responsible for yielding this very nice basket of fish, which averaged about $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.

On the previous Saturday the water was too discoloured for fly fishing, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ brace only represented the catch of the same angler and a friend who accompanied him. The latter gentleman, a few days ago, returned from the Little Coates stream with $4\frac{1}{2}$ brace of nice sizeable trout. Mr. Hopper has only been out once since the opening of the season, on the 19th April, and for the first hour and a half, never moved a fish. The wind was nearly due west—a point of south in it—but it blew very strongly and it was difficult to cast the flies on the water with any accuracy. Afterwards the wind moderated somewhat, and the sun also coming out, the weather became more genial, and, when Mr. Hopper put his rod in his case, at twenty past four, he had landed seven trout—the largest weighing 1 lb. 10 oz—the next two largest just upon 1 lb. each—and one $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. and the three others in good condition but smaller. The big fellow was consigned to a spiritual quarter, and the four next largest in size went to invalids, who would doubtless be able to negotiate such tender morsels. Mr. Hopper had a six miles trudge home which, needless to say, he mightily enjoyed.

Turning to coarse fishing on the Louth and Tetney Canal, roach were never really "on" until March, when they began to show sport with a vengeance—as anglers well know, the close season for coarse fishing is from 15th March to 15th June, but even in July last the roach in the canal were only then beginning to spawn. The open season might well be extended until the last week in April. That well-known and skilful angler, McNab, brought to bank one day in March 174 roach and gudgeon. The latter were a splendid sample, and though none of the roach reached aldermanic proportions (they seldom do in the canal) the average size was very good indeed. McNab does not often go fishing, as a rule not more than three or four days a week at the outside, and as he seldom returns with less than 80 or 90 fish, certain well-known Israelites in the town who make a point of meeting him at the station on his return journey must fare sumptuously when McNab is piscatorially inclined.

It is a baseless slander that McNab and another well-known wielder of the rod, living in Sussex street, have relinquished their respective callings and qualified for the medical profession. The rumour that they had done so was put about by a certain coterie well known to McNab and his friend. During the winter Mr. Hopper and McNab tried new fishing grounds, or rather waters, with very fair success, altogether nearly a score roach scaling 11b. each with many others smaller in size being landed, and amongst other chub Mr. Hopper bringing one to bank on fine roach tackle which weighed 3lbs. all but an ounce, McNab also got one about two pounds.

This new fishing ground is resorted to by a few Sheffield and Manchester anglers, who one early morning, whilst McNab and Mr. Hopper were still slumbering, very carefully fished a swim which the latter had ground-baited overnight, and extracted therefrom sundry large chub, as was evidenced by the numerous big scales left on the bank—blow these early anglers—it was a mean trick though, and very unsportsman-like.

Mr. Hopper, accompanied by McNab, paid his annual visit to the Trent-side for his vacation holiday at the end of July and beginning of August last year. Barbel up to 4½lbs. and 5lbs. each fell to their rods, and at Dunham Dubbs one morning about 40lbs. of carp bream were captured in 28 feet of water, the largest in size running 3½lbs. and 4lbs. each. One morning before breakfast, when trying a newly-found swim McNab was broken four times by big barbel and he arrived home at the hostelry in a most disconsolate state. Roach and chub were dead off during the Trent-side visit, only a few of each being caught, the largest chub 2½lbs., falling to Mr. Hopper, but a lot of fine eels, flounders, and dace were caught.

Mr. Hopper discovered that McNab was a pious fraud. Mr. Hopper generally attends the church of the village where he stays, the parson being a most excellent preacher, but for some reason McNab wished to go over the river and attend the church there. Mr. Hopper is usually in an accommodating mood with his angling mates so acceded to McNab's request. On arrival at the church it was found that the over-river parson was too ill to preach a sermon, and it occurred to Mr. Hopper that the reason of McNab selecting that particular church was due to his liking a short service, but nothing of the sort—the parson had two pretty daughters whom McNab had espied boating on the river the previous week, and Mr. Hopper had his devotional spirit much shocked at discovering McNab during the singing of a hymn doing some wireless telegraphy with the younger, and of course the prettier, daughter. Mr. Hopper does not usually "snidge" on his angling mates except in the matter of Cardigan jackets, but McNab's conduct in the matter of the parson's daughter must be subjected to the ordeal of being made public. Mr. Hopper thinks that all proper-minded people will agree with him that McNab fully justified the title of a "pious fraud."

The Parliamentary bye-election occurred at Grimsby whilst McNab and Mr. Hopper were at Trent-side, and in response to an urgent "whip" they rose at six on the day of the election and abandoned their fishing pursuits for the day and came

over to Grimsby at an expense to each of 15s. 11½d. and recorded their votes; they are each still minus that 15s. 11½d. and also the day's fishing, but they hope to make up for the loss of the latter by again visiting Trent-side during the coming summer and landing barbel and carp bream of stupendous proportions.

The best and most recent fishing tale which has come under Mr. Hopper's notice is as follows:—Six anglers were staying at a quiet fishing inn in a Yorkshire village, and one evening, when enjoying their pipes after their late dinner, one of them, whom we will call Jones, said he would like to fish the trout stream in the Park close by, but there was no chance of doing so as it was so strictly preserved. Smith said he would undertake to fish it next day, and if the keeper came up he would only tip him half-a-crown and have his day's fishing. Jones thereupon, the door connecting the anglers' sitting-room with the bar being slightly ajar, seeing the keeper having a pint at the bar, said to Smith "I'll bet you 10s. you don't" "Done," said Smith. The other four anglers thought that if it was good enough for Jones to have 10s. on it was good enough for them, so each of them laid Smith 10s. he could not fish the private water in question and only tip the keeper half-a-crown. Next morning the six anglers sallied forth with their rods and Smith nimbly popped over the Park fence and was soon fishing the private stream in the Park, the other five betaking themselves to public waters. In the evening Smith returned with 10 brace of splendid trout and in reply to the queries of the other five declared that he had caught them all in the private stream in the Park, that the keeper came to him and that it was a fact he had only tipped him half-a-crown. He therefore called upon each of the five to hand over to him 10s. which they did, he thus pocketing 50s.

Jones thought that if it was good enough for Smith to fish the Park water and only tip the keeper 2s. 6d. it must be good enough for him. So early next morning, before the others were awake, he stole away from the hostelry and was soon fishing the Park stream. Presently the keeper appeared and demanded his "permit." "Oh! its all right," said Jones,

offering the keeper half-a-crown, which the latter declined to accept. "Well," said Jones, "I'm not particular to a crown," handing a bit of the family plate to the keeper, which the latter refused, saying "No, I can't take that, if you haven't a permit from the squire you must come with me to the Hall." Jones accordingly had to do so. The result was that Jones was informed by the squire he could either have his rod and tackle confiscated and pay two guineas to the County Hospital, or, as an alternative, submit to be prosecuted for fishing in private waters without leave. Jones, being a man of some position, submitted with a bad grace and gave up his rod and tackle and handed over two guineas for the Hospital.

Needless to say, he returned considerably crestfallen, and no sooner had the dinner-cloth cleared away than, addressing Smith, he said "You're a thundering liar when you say you "fished the private stream in the Park and only tipped the "keeper half-a-crown. I've been there to-day and the keeper "not only refused the crown I offered him as a tip, but lugged "me off to the hall, and the squire has confiscated my rod and "tackle and made me pay £2 2s. od. to the Hospital Fund." Smith replied, "I am not a liar, but I omitted to tell you "fellows when you bet me 10s. each the other night that I had "a permit from the squire to fish the Park stream. Good-"night all. I hope you'll have a good night, Jones." Mr. Hopper understands that the writer of the angling notes in the *Yorkshire Weekly Post* is responsible for this angling story, and if such be the case it is only right to acknowledge its source.

1900.

XXXII.—ABOUT WIDOWS—ALSO ABOUT TRENT NETTING
AND LOCAL ANGLING.

MCNAB is fond of a cup of tea, and Mr. Hopper must also plead guilty to being very partial to the cup which cheers but does not inebriate. Now McNab and Mr. Hopper have been to Trent-side to lure the wily barbel and skull-drag some ponderous bream from the depths of Dunham Dubbs. But now a word to show how the tea comes in.

These two anglers were most fortunate in finding themselves located in most pleasant lodgings, a short distance from the river, and the good landlady was assisted in her household duties by a very devoted daughter whom, to conceal her identity, we will call Frances. Now Frances was decidedly pretty—that is why McNab secured the lodgings—and she had also a lot of nice little attentive ways, which were not lost upon McNab. McNab does not like walking, so if he had a particularly lazy mood upon him Frances or her good mother would bring tea down to the river, and a small picnic would be held on the bank.

On one occasion Frances' mother brought tea down to the river-side, and she was accompanied by one of the charming widows resident in that part of Trent-side. Nearly every other female is a widow there—why, Mr. Hopper cannot tell, as the men seem all right and of too good a sort to be polished off. The tea, as usual, was delicious, so was the wid—beg pardon, the bread and butter. Now this particular widow was venture-some. McNab, good boatman as he is, had drawn the boat to the river side and secured it, leaving only a little slack rope between it and the stake it was moored to. It was a glorious afternoon, and everything in the—by the riverside—was lovely. The water was translucent—that is a particularly good word, Mr. Editor.

Well, the widow, followed by Frances' mother, stepped down the bank and gracefully into the boat. Not so Frances' mother. The widow's getting into the boat had caused it to glide away from the river-side a foot or two, and when the other widow—that is Frances' mother— essayed to follow her there was a big splash and a loud shriek. Now, it is on occasions such as this that McNab shows the metal he is made of. In one instant he had rushed down the bank and grasped the situation, and also the widow—the one in the water, not the one in the boat. McNab prides himself on his muscle and strength of arm, but 14½ stones of humanity is not child's play. He tugged and tugged, but for some time to no purpose. Eventually Frances' mother was landed, very wet, rather frightened, and full of gratitude to McNab for having rescued her from a more prolonged ducking. Mr. Hopper is unable to say whether he rendered assistance or not—he thinks he must have held McNab round the waist while the latter held on to the widow.

However, alls well that ends well, and beyond the temporary fright and a bit of a ducking the immersion caused no serious consequences to Frances' maternal relative, and the other widow was sworn to secrecy so that the little incident should not become village talk and gossip. McNab will in due course receive the customary medal, and needless to say his gallant conduct has placed him high in the estimation of the numerous widows in that locality—in fact nearly all the widows wanted to bring him tea to the river-side, but he prudently declined all such kind offers. What “stirring” events may arise even from a cup of tea!

Now the River Trent is not so productive of good sport as it was even so recently as 8 or 10 years ago, and the cause is the shameful amount of netting which is allowed. In the winter months when there is a “fresh” down the river, the big fish of all kinds are too lazy to stem the rapid volume of water coming down the river bed, so they go on to the grassy slopes where there may be a couple of feet of water, and feed on the worms which come out. This is the netter's opportunity. He sweeps his net round them and secures a big haul of fish, which he

sends from the nearest station to Manchester, Sheffield, and other large towns where there is a large Jewish population, amongst whom ready purchasers of fresh-water fish are found. Mr. Hopper ascertained that on one occasion last winter 12 cwt. of fish were despatched on one day from the station nearest to where he spends his usual summer holiday, and on several other occasions he saw in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* accounts of cwts. of fish being caught in the manner described and sent off to the two towns named.

All that the netters have to do is to obtain the consent of the adjoining land owners to their netting. No licence is required to be taken out except for salmon netting. The result is that the supply of store fish is gradually being depleted, and rod fishing suffers year by year. Rod fishing would never of itself injure the river, which is too great in extent, and in the lower reaches—say below Newark, is not fished to any great extent. Of course there are a few Saturday and Sunday anglers from Sheffield and Lincoln, but on other days one may walk for miles on the banks without coming across a single angler. So blow the netting.

Neither bream nor barbel were really well on during McNab's and Mr. Hopper's visit. What barbel were caught were mostly over 4lbs. in weight, the largest $4\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., falling to the rod of Mr. Hopper. Several of $4\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. were landed, and, it should be added, each angler lost some good fish. Bream never came on as they should have done. Mazawattee joined McNab and Mr. Hopper during the last days of their visit. The day previous to his coming 22lbs. of bream had been caught, largest $3\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., and on the following day $37\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. weight was landed, making $59\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. in two days. Then the weather began to break up and violent winds made it very difficult to fish properly, but still a few nice bream were caught, and also some good sized eels, one very large one being lost by Mr. Hopper.

Roach were dead off, but it is little use fishing for roach before September in the Trent; one day McNab and Mr. Hopper caught ten different varieties of fish. Flounders are getting very scarce, and gudgeon seem few and far between.

Only a few years ago, when dace fishing, Mr. Hopper used to catch two gudgeon to every five dace. McNab and Mr. Hopper also landed a few nice chub, the largest, $2\frac{3}{4}$ lbs., falling to Mr. Hopper, but McNab landed the greatest quantity. The river was very clear indeed, and floating for barbel was found to be useless, however "fine" one fished. The float was therefore taken off after being given a good trial, and "legering" or "plumbing" as some call it resorted to. By this kind of fishing the gut lies on the bed of the river and is not so likely to attract the fishes' attention as when suspended in clear water. Mr. Hopper should add that the barbel were captured in about 11 feet of water, and the bream in a swim 24 feet deep. Of course a "running" float was used in this depth of water—so much for McNab's and Mr. Hopper's Trent-side outing. Sport was not bad. It may be termed fairly moderate, which means that it cannot compare with the sport of a few years ago.

With regard to trout fishing, the local becks have run low during the summer months, and in consequence Mr. Hopper has only had his fly rod out once or twice. He had one fair catch, the largest trout being just a pound and a quarter, but the big store fish are caught with the worm and other baits by individuals who shall be nameless, but who pride themselves on being "skilful fly fishers." Big deeds of angling prowess are oft related at sundry bars, but Mr. Hopper generally knows what bait has accounted for the *monsters*. Mr. Hopper has, however, had one glorious day this year with his fly rod; he had secured a "permit" restricted to the artificial fly only, over four miles of preserved water in a Lincolnshire town some distance from Grimsby. Mr. Hopper left by the quarter to six a.m. train and was fishing by half-past eight. The water was very clear and the stream rapid, but until he came to a bend in the river where the wind caught the river and raised a ripple he could do no good. Then the friendly ripple helped him, and when Mr. Hopper put up his rod at half-past three he had landed 20 brace of trout in 80 yards of water. He was only bound to return two brace for want of size, but returned six

brace to the river to furnish sport for another angler, thus retaining 14 brace. At half-past six, Mr. Hopper having given the river a three hours' rest, visited the same 80 yards stretch of water again, and flogged it for two hours and never had a rise. Such is the perversity of fish at times—but then, the wind had dropped and the surface of the water was like glass. Mr. Hopper wants another day on that river next year.

Some very good catches of roach have been made on the Louth Canal at Thoresby, Firebeacon and Fulstow Bridge. Catchwater Drain has not fished well this year. A few good roach have been brought to bank, but no bream of any size or in any quantity, and tench have also been "off." Hob Hole has, however, fished better than it has done for several years, bream, roach, and tench giving good sport on several occasions. McNab landed six stones of bream in two days a few weeks ago at the fence end above the "Wellington" Inn. Mr. Hopper caught some fine roach nearer old Leake one day last week. They were in perfect condition, and fought grandly, creed wheat was the "killing" bait. Some Boltonians had been having very fair sport a little distance away from the Leake pumping station. They were on a visit of a week or ten days, so were able to bait the ground well. Many anglers go to the Hob Hole Drain and complain that they cannot find the bream—that is due to this cause—bream work in shoals, and when feeding soon eat up what natural food there is. When feeding they move slowly, gradually working in one direction, going as much as $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles in that respect. They will take days and days to cover this extent of ground. They will then probably find themselves in the Lock-pit at the pumping station, and there they will remain for two or even three days feeding upon what food they are able to find there. They do not then slowly work back to where they had started from. They go with a rush, and are soon back at the place $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles away from where they started on their feeding expedition. They have the instinct to know that ground they have lately fed over will not have recuperated itself in the short space of time since they left it. This will explain to some angling novices

why they very often miss the bream altogether at Hob Hole. Of course Mr. Hopper knows full well from experience that bream are funny fish and will only feed when they are so inclined. Mr. Hopper must now draw his notes to a close so far as this article is concerned.

1900.

XXXIII.—THE "KILLING" OF THE LOUTH AND TETNEY
CANAL.

IF there is a fishing resort dear to the heart of the Grimsby angler it is the Louth and Tetney Canal, or to give its more correct name "The Navigable Canal from the town of Louth to the River Humber in the County of Lincoln," but alas! if things are permitted to go on as at present, it will, before many years are past, be an angling resort no longer. But how is this? Mr. Hopper's angling readers will exclaim, "Surely that splendidly stocked water cannot be depleted of the immense shoals of fish it contains by fair and legitimate angling!" No, certainly not, Mr. Hopper replies. No fair rod fishing would ever sensibly diminish the stock of fish, but there are evils gradually working towards the destruction, and eventually the entire extinction of the fish from end to end of the canal.

Before proceeding to explain what these causes are, Mr. Hopper can claim to have a tolerably long and intimate knowledge of the canal, for he has fished in its waters for a period of 47 years. That makes Mr. Hopper somewhat of an "ancient" in angling matters, but he started to wield the rod early in his juvenile days, when he was just as keen on a day's fishing as he is now. Lying extended across his knee Mr. Hopper has now before him what probably no other Grimsby angler has, viz., a plan and longitudinal section of the canal (as surveyed October, 1828,) from the River Head, at Louth, down to the White Gate on the Tetney Sea Bank, that bone of contention between the late Mr. Charles West, a man of many lawsuits, and the Tetney Inclosure Commissioners. The length of the canal is $11\frac{3}{4}$ miles and 121 yards. Beyond the White Gate (although the canal proper ends there) its course is continued along what is known as the "New Cut," and thence seawards or rather Humberwards under the name of "Tetney Haven," and its waters pursue their course to a little beyond the first Hob Beacon, the complete distance from its commencement at the River Head, Louth, being 15 miles.

In its course it passes through, or nearly touches, the following places and Lordships, viz., Louth, Keddington, Alvingham, Covenham Saint Bartholomew, Yarborough, Covenham Saint Mary, Grainthorpe, Fulstow, Marshchapel, North Thoresby, North Cotes, and Tetney. Four of these places are honoured with the designation of "Lordship." The proper or correct name of the Louth Lock is the "Top" Lock. Then comes "Keddington Church" Lock (and in the graveyard round that church rest the mortal remains of some generations of Mr. Hopper's paternal ancestors). After that "Ticklepenny" Lock, (just one mile from the commencement of the canal), then "Willow's" Lock, (by many now wrongly called "Carritt's" Lock). Then "Salter Fen" Lock (again wrongly referred to by many as "Willow's" Lock). Two miles have now gone by. Then follow Alvingham Lock and bridge, and then the well-known foot bridge opposite Alvingham and Cockerington Church, and a few yards beyond this is the three-mile post. Then comes the "High Bridge" and shortly afterwards "Out Fen" Lock, which is the last on the canal before Tetney Lock, just beyond which is the 11-mile post. The stretch of water popularly referred to as "the pond" between Out Fen Lock and Tetney Lock is therefore seven miles in length, and it is to that stretch of water the great majority of the Grimsby anglers wend their way.

The most popular resorts in this seven miles "pond" are Austin Fen, Fire Beacon, Fulstow Bridge, Fulstow Drain End, Thoresby Bridge, and the bend of the canal just before the 9½-mile post where the canal trends in a N.N.E. direction towards Tetney. Between Out Fen Lock and Austin Fen there is a drain on the west side flowing into the canal which in some way or other is generally referred to by anglers as "Black Dike" end, but Mr. Hopper thinks this has arisen from the similarity of name of another drain, more on the Tetney side of Austin Fen, the proper designation of which is "Hack Dike."

The foregoing particulars will give a pretty accurate idea of the canal, which should be throughout its course rather more

than five feet from datum to surface of water mark. Up to a very few years ago there were fish, and good sized ones too, in the length of water between the Top Lock and Keddington Church Lock and between the latter Lock and Ticklepenny Lock, but it is extremely doubtful if any species survive except the well-known stickle back, which Grimsby anglers do not usually go to angle for. Up to three years ago undoubtedly the best pond on the whole canal for fishing was the stretch of water between Ticklepenny Lock and Willow's Lock. McNab and Mr. Hopper have many times had splendid catches there of two and a half and three stones of roach each, roach mostly running from six ounces to 14 ounces each. The Kentish Baronet has also had similar good "takes" from that length—but during the past three years none of these anglers have had a single bite there. The next pond between Willow's Lock and Salter Fen Lock was almost an equally good stretch of water both for size and quantity, in particular three years ago last August or September Mr. Hopper remembers landing upwards of three stone weight of roach and gudgeon in one day's fishing and also calls to mind days of 80, 60 and 40 fine strapping gudgeon besides roach and perch. Several times last year he fished this length without a bite, and on other days caught perhaps half a dozen roach, whilst only a few days ago he tried it fruitlessly.

Where have all the fish gone to? What evil is at work? Mr. Hopper thinks there can be little doubt that two causes are responsible for the destruction of fish in these lengths, first and foremost, most probably, the pollution of the water of the canal by the drainage into it from the Lud, of the offensive matter from the water closets in Louth, and secondly, by reason of the washing in the basin of the canal of barrels in which the "weed killer" is made or stored. Mr. Hopper has been informed that arsenic is largely used in the manufacture of the weed killer. He has also been informed, though he cannot vouch for its truth, that even a more deadly ingredient is used in making the weed killer, but that has been denied by one of the officials connected with the Navigation, who asserts that the destruction of fish is not due in any way to the weed killer,

but to the sewage matter which gets into the canal from the river Lud, and the official in question stated that this could be proved by the work of the dredger. However, the fact remains that the Navigation Commissioners charge anglers 6d. per day for the privilege of fishing in the canal, and at the same time permit the Luda Weed Killing Company, or some company or body of persons trading under that high-sounding title, to cleanse their poisonous barrels in the waters of the canal.

It is monstrous that this state of things should be permitted to exist. If a body of persons permit fishing in the canal, and issue tickets which they charge for, they should certainly not allow the waters of the canal to be in any way contaminated. It may be taken that three "ponds" have already been virtually killed so far as angling is concerned. It will not take long before the contaminated waters invade the next length and work destruction amongst the fish there—then Alvingham pond will be entered and destroyed and it is the length next above Out Fen Lock.

The question naturally arises "How long will it be before the whole length of the long pond is contaminated and poisoned and the sport of the Grimsby anglers completely spoilt?" Where will the hundreds of Grimsby anglers go for their day's outing and sport when this has happened? It is a matter which concerns not only Grimsby anglers but the wielders of the rod at Louth, Hull and other towns. In Mr. Hopper's opinion it is certainly a matter of grave concern for the members of the various angling associations and clubs in Grimsby, and he thinks that before it is too late the committees of these associations and clubs should combine together and make representations to the Commissioners of the navigation with a view to stop the pollution and contamination of the water of the canal and the consequent destruction of fish. Mr. Hopper hopes that the particulars he has given in the first portion of this article respecting the canal may prove interesting to his fellow rodsmen, but he equally hopes and trusts that they will bestir themselves to endeavour to prevent their favourite angling "water" being "killed" in the manner suggested by the concluding portion of these notes.

XXXIV.—AT LAST!

MR. Hopper,—I have been a lonely bachelor for more than twelve months, which is a long period for a fish to remain in a state of *single blessedness*, so I have ventured from my watery retreat in the Park lake for a short time to write a letter to inform you and that portion of the Grimsby public which frequents the Park of my approaching nuptials. Oh! Mr. Hopper, these twelve months have been an awful time for me. I am just upon 40 years of age, and the bluest of blue blood flows in my veins. I am not a common river carp; my associations and family connections from the first day of my existence have been of the most aristocratic and exclusive nature. My parents—indeed my ancestors for many generations—were born on Yarborough soil. Oh! how I sigh for Croxby lake! It was there we were all born. And then one day, simply because I saw a lump of sweet paste—so innocent looking—and took it in my mouth, I was ruthlessly snatched from the home of my ancestors and transferred to the lake in the Grimsby People's Park, there to lead a solitary life, so far as my own kith and kin are concerned, for upwards of twelve months.

No, Mr. Hopper, I never expected to see my flame Bessy again. She was 30 years old, which is quite a juvenile age for one of the carp species, and we had courted a number of years, and we were just about being married when some horrid man, as I have since heard, laid that tempting morsel of paste right under my nose. It was just breakfast-time—that horrid man must have known I was hungry—well, I took the paste in my mouth, and commenced to swim away, when all at once—*Whew!* I felt something awful being driven into my jaws, and a shock like a young earthquake. I struggled hard for a long time, but eventually I was towed ashore with a long line, and lifted in a net out of the water on to the bank. Oh! if I had been wise in time! I found standing on the bank, showing every sign of the most rapturous glee and pleasure, a man I had often seen on the bank previously, and I had often

wondered what brought him so frequently to the lake side, little dreaming he had any designs against myself or any of my species. I have since heard it was a wicked lawyer who lured me with that piece of paste.

"Well! he took me away from all my relatives and friends, and worst of all from Bessy. He stowed me away in some wet grass, and put me in a large basket on his back, and then jolted me all the way to Grimsby, until my whole body, including my dorsal fin, hurt most dreadfully. To cut short this part of my sad experience, the aforesaid wicked and cruel lawyer after keeping me in his bath for a day or two, carried me to the Park and put me in the lake, where I found lots of vulgar fish with no aristocratic connections or antecedents at all. Certainly, there were some trout, which are all very well in their way, but they only live 12 or 14 years, whereas my species live for more than 200 years. It was useless forming a friendship with a fish of such fleeting existence as that. My weight was then nearly 13lbs. I roamed about the Park lake, and soon found I was the only carp there. What a cruel fate was mine! Quite a young bachelor, and no means of communicating with my Croxby friends. It appears that some one wrote to the Grimsby papers and stated that a fine carp had been placed in the Park lake, and lots of people came to look for me; and because I was too timid to show myself to them their first time of coming they seldom, if ever, came again. Now, I know, Mr. Hopper, that you were the kind gentleman who wrote to the papers and sent a list of the food I was partial to, but some people brought new potatoes and peas, without peeling the former or part boiling them or the peas. They never washed the lettuces they threw in, and seemed to think that as I was only a carp I was not particular about the food I took or its cleanliness. You, Mr. Hopper, however, came lots of times during the cherry season, and threw in lots of that delicious fruit, which I enjoyed very much. In return for your kindness and consideration, and to show I was not ungrateful, I let you see me several times.

But, oh lawks! Mr. Hopper, I have had some awful frights. The first morning after I was put in the lake one of the park gardeners got into the pram (punt) with a long pole and went about all over the lake, and I quite thought he was on the look out for me. That gave me an awful fit of the cold shivers. However, I found out after a few mornings that it was his practice to go every morning in the pram and feed the rabbits and waterfowl on the islands. Then these horrid swans! They were continually diving their long heads and necks under water, and if I happened to be anywhere about having a quiet doze they always struck at me most viciously with their bills, so I keep as clear of the swans as I can. Well, the Egyptian geese were nearly as bad. If I put my dorsal fin or tail out of the water they were down upon either one or the other at once. They are very savage birds, and I saw them kill three little wild ducks one evening this summer. And those little diving ducks! they used to pop down four and five at a time and keep under the water 13 or 14 seconds. They frightened me very much at first, but we are good friends now. The Muscovy ducks chased me a bit at first, and gave me a lot of trouble and anxiety, and more exercise than I cared for, but when their "breeding time" came they let me alone. The Spanish geese were all right except for their everlasting cackle—they are as bad as washer-women—they disturbed my afternoon naps a good deal.

I suffered, however, more from that skating last winter than anything. For six weeks I had no rest at all, and some days there were so many people on the ice I thought they must come through it and crush me. I have heard the Park Keeper say "It's a long lane that has no turning," and often wondered what he meant, but I know now, and that is the reason why I have headed this letter "at last." On Tuesday last, about half-past nine in the morning, I saw on the bank of the Park lake a lady and gentleman, and you Mr. Hopper, for I recognised you as the gentleman who used to bring me the cherries. The gentleman, whose name I did not know, had a large bundle with him, which he carried with great care, and I

heard him say "It pulled like a great bullock." The cherry gentleman—meaning you, Mr. Hopper—suggested "more like a calf." I immediately came to the conclusion I was going to have some extraordinary companion—I heard some further talk about weights and scales being fetched, and the unknown gentleman guessed 11lbs., and you guessed 12lbs, and I began to think it must be a very small calf to weigh so little. The former gentleman then said it had^d knocked some scales off when in his bath, and as I knew that calves had not any scales, and were not usually put in gentlemen's baths, I began to turn over in my mind whether I was not going to have a companion of my own species brought me. I saw a bottle produced, and some liquid poured over where it was said the scales were off, to prevent any fungoid growth, and then to my intense delight I saw my "old flame" Bessy brought out from a number of wet wrappers and carefully placed in the Park lake.

As luck would have it, she swam right into the weeds where I was in hiding, and immediately recognised me as her former lover. Bessy was very plump and in most perfect condition, and told me she weighed 12 lbs. when put in the scales, and as I weigh now rather over 13 lbs., we are a very comely couple. Bessy told me she fell a victim in precisely the same manner as I had done, namely, to a small sweet piece of white paste, and the experience of her capture was nearly identical with my own, the only difference being that in her case the lucky captor was not a wicked lawyer. Bessy and I will wait until the spring before being married, and when we have got over family troubles, and hatched some small carp fry, we shall begin to sport ourselves in the Park lake about July. Bring us lots of cherries then. This is a long story, Mr. Hopper, but I thought you would like to hear a little more about myself and also about my future wife.—Yours piscatorially,

THE CARP IN THE PARK LAKE.

P.S.—It is Bessy who is writing this postscript—she is given to understand that in polite society and genteel circles it is one of the privileges conceded to her sex to have the monopoly of adding the most important part of a letter a little bit after the

ordinary letter is finished. She desires to explain that owing to some unaccountable reason the above letter, although written just upon ten years ago, never reached the hands of Mr. Hopper until the year of grace 1901. However, that circumstance did not prevent her nuptials with her old lover taking place in the early spring of the year 1892. Mr. Hopper was to have "given her away," but not having received the foregoing communication of her intended husband he was not present, and none of her relations being in the lake, the ceremony was a quite private one and being "of age" Bessy "gave herself away," and she has never since regretted the choice she made, for *Cyprinus Carpio* has proved a model and most excellent husband.

In May of 1892 I (Bessy) started with what may seem a rather large family. There were 600,000 of them and I felt weak and out of sorts and out of condition until the following July, when I began to recuperate and was able to exercise a certain amount of control and restraint over the members of my large family—it was a case of the survival of the fittest, and several hundred thousand of my progeny died as is usually the case, but still many tens of thousands survived the crucial period of their infancy and some of my first year's family are now getting nicely on and are strong and vigorous. I have had a large family each year since, but my pride is naturally centred in my first "brood" of youngsters. About five years after their birth the strongest and most robust of my children began to be more self reliant, and although shy and wary as becomes the carp species they would when bread was thrown into the lake make a dash to the surface of the water to secure the edible morsels and many were the conversations which I (Bessy) heard from the frequenters of the Park who were not learned in piscatorial matters.

It was a matter of general wonderment and speculation what species of fish my family were—some thought they were roach, some suggested they were dace, and others that they were tench—Mr. Hopper was frequently there when these conversations were taking place, and he explained that they could not

be roach because not only were their numbers too great, but roach did not dash to the surface in the quick manner the members of my family did; nor were they, he said, dace, as they were too thick-bodied for that species, and also too numerous; nor were they tench, as my youngsters were a rough scale fish, and quite unlike a tench in appearance or habits. Mr. Hopper was quite right when he said they were the descendants of Bessy and her mate—he told the people by the lake side that he knew Bessy had married the carp which the wicked lawyer had caught and put in the lake, because a year or so after I had been placed in the lake he had seen me swimming alongside the other big carp, when the water of the lake had been run quite low, and he knew from the fact of our swimming so close together, and in so friendly a manner, that we were of opposite sexes, as neither two big male fish nor two female fish of so large a size and of our species would swim along in close proximity to one another.

I have also heard people remark that the water in the lake was a bad colour owing to the fish stirring up the mud. How do they know? Some golden coloured Prussian carp were put in the lake some years ago, as a gift, I understand, by a German lady, but we, from Croxby, don't recognise them as belonging to us at all, and we hold aloof from them, in fact we cut them dead and have never called upon them. They are always showing themselves off at the top of the water, and have no self respect nor any sense of decency. My descendants have been strictly warned against intermarrying with them, and I am confident they will never do so. In conclusion, my husband desires me to say that we both hope and expect to live at least another 150 years, so we shall see many generations of Grimbarians pass away. I must now conclude this long postscript, but I wanted to say what I have, so as to get it into Mr. Hopper's book, and let his readers know that we were properly married, and have had about 600,000 children each year. So good bye, Mr. Hopper, and all dear Grimsby people.

BESSY.

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